EVIDENCES
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

BY THE

RIGHT HON. JOSEPH ADDISON.

To which are added, Discourses against

ATHEISM AND INFIDELITY.

With a Preface.

Containing the Sentiments of

Mr. BOYLE, Mr. LOCKE, and Sir ISAAC NEWTON,

Concerning the

GOSPEL REVELATION.

Cooke's Edition.

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PREFACE.

THE character of Mr. Addiſon and his writings, for juſtneſs of thought, ſtrength of reaſoning, and purity of ſtyle, is too well eſtabliſhed to need a recommendation; but their greateſt ornament, and that which gives a luſtre to all the reſt, is his appearing, throughout, a zealous advocate for virtue and religion, againſt profaneneſs and infidelity. And becauſe his excellent diſcourſes upon thoſe ſubjects lie diſperſed among his other writings, and are by that means not ſo generally known and read as they deſerve, it was judged to be no unſeaſonable ſervice to religion to publiſh them in a diſtinct volume; in hopes, that the elegance and beauty peculiar to Mr. Addiſon's writings, would recommend them to perſons of ſuperior character and liberal education; and, as they are the productions of a layman, they may be the more readily received, and conſidered as a proper manual of religion.

Sceptics and infidels are great pretenders to reaſon and philoſophy, and are willing to inſinuate, that none who are really poſſeſſed of thoſe talents, can eaſily aſſent to the truth of chriſtianity. But unfortunately for them and their cauſe, many perſons, who were doubtleſs the moſt perfect reaſoners and philoſophers of their time, are alſo known to have been firm believers; we mean Mr. Boyle, Mr. Locke, Sir Iſaac Newton, and Mr. Addiſon: who were as perfect reaſoners as any of the ſceptics and infidels of this day. Some of them might have been ſingular in their opinions about particular points in chriſtianity, which will ever be the caſe as long as men are prone to error; but what we here inſiſt on, is, that they were accurate reaſoners, and at the ſame time firm believers.

Mr. Boyle, the moſt exact ſearcher into the works of nature that any age has known, and who ſaw atheiſm and infidelity beginning to prevail in the looſe and voluptuous reign of king Charles the ſecond, purſued his philoſophical inquiries with religious views, to eſtabliſh the minds of men in a firm belief, and thorough ſenſe of the infinite power and wiſdom of the great Creator.

This account we have from Dr. Burnet, who was intimately acquainted with him, and preached his funeral ſermon: "It appeared to thoſe who converſed with him in his inquiries into nature, that his main deſign in that (on which as he had his own eye moſt conſtantly, ſo he took care to put others often in mind of it) was to raiſe in himſelf and others, ſublimer thoughts of the greatneſs and glory, and of the wiſdom and goodneſs of God. This was ſo deep in his thoughts, that he concludes the article of his will which relates to that illuſtrious body, the royal ſociety,

in theſe words:" 'wiſhing them a happy ſucceſs in their laudable attempts to diſcover the true nature of the works of God; and praying that they, and all other ſearchers into phyſical truths, may cordially refer their attainments to the glory of the great Author of nature, and to the comfort of mankind.' The ſame perſon alſo ſpeaks thus of him: "He had the profoundeſt veneration for the great God of heaven and earth that ever I obſerved in any perſon. The very name of God was never mentioned by him without a perceptible pauſe in his diſcourſe.

And of the ſtrict and exemplary courſe of his whole life, he ſays, "I might here challenge the whole tribe of libertines to come and view the uſefulneſs, as well as the excellence of the chriſtian religion, in a life that was entirely dedicated to it.

Againſt the atheiſts, he wrote his 'Free enquiry into the received notion of nature,' (to confute the pernicious principle of aſcribing effects to nature, which are only produced by the infinite power and wiſdom of God;) and alſo his 'Eſſay about final cauſes of things natural,' to ſhew that all things in nature were made and contrived with great order, and every thing for its proper end and uſe, by an all-wiſe Creator.

Againſt the deiſts he wrote a treatiſe 'of things above reaſon;' in which he makes it appear, that ſeveral things which we judge to be contrary to reaſon, being above the reach of our underſtanding, are not therefore to be thought unreaſonable, becauſe we cannot comprehend them, ſince they may be apparently reaſonable to a greater and more comprehenſive underſtanding. He wrote another treatiſe, to ſhew the poſſibility of the 'reſurrection of the ſame body.'

The veneration he had for the holy ſcriptures, appears not only from his ſtudying them with great exactneſs, and exhorting others to do the ſame; but more particularly from a diſtinct treatiſe which he wrote on purpoſe to defend the ſcripture ſtyle, and to anſwer all the objections which profane and irreligious perſons have made againſt it. And ſpeaking of morality conſidered as a rule of life, he ſays, "I have formerly taken pains to peruſe books of morality; yet, ſince they have only a power to perſuade, but not to command, and ſin and death do not neceſſarily attend the diſobedience of them, they have the leſs influence; for ſince we may take the liberty to queſtion human writers, I find that the methods they take to impoſe their writings upon us may ſerve to countenance either truth or falſhood."

His zeal to propagate chriſtianity in the world, appears by many and large benefactions to that end; which are enumerated in his funeral ſermon. "He was at the charge of the tranſlation and impreſſion of the New Teſtament into the Malayan language, which

which he ſent over all the Eaſt Indies. He gave an ample reward to the tranſlator of Grotius's incomparable book of the truth of the chriſtian religion into Arabic, and was at the charge of a whole impreſſion, which he ordered to be diſtributed in all the countries where that language is underſtood. He deſigned to have carried on the impreſſion of the New Teſtament in the Turkiſh language; but the Eaſt India company thought it became their duty, and accordingly undertook it; but he contributed liberally towards the completion of the tranſlation. He was at ſeven hundred pounds expence in the edition of the Iriſh Bible, which he ordered to be diſtributed in Ireland, and he contributed largely both to the impreſſions of the Welſh Bible, and of the Iriſh Bible, in Scotland. He gave, during his life, three hundred pounds to advance the deſign of propagating the chriſtian religion in America; and as ſoon as he heard that the Eaſt India company entertained the like deſign in the eaſt, he ſent an hundred pounds as an example, to induce others to contribute, but intended to increaſe his donation, when there ſhould be a probability of accompliſhing the undertaking. Though ſome accidents prevented him from ſettling it during his life, he ordered in his will, that a liberal proviſion ſhould be made for a clergyman, who ſhould, in a courſe of well digeſted ſermons, every year eſtabliſh the truth of the chriſtian religion in general, without deſcending to the ſubdiviſions amongſt chriſtians; and who ſhould be changed every third year, that ſo this laudable ſtudy might be purſued by many divines, by which means many might become maſters of the arguments advanced on the ſubject.

In his younger years he had thoughts of entering into holy orders, but one reaſon that determined him againſt it, was, that he conceived he might, in ſome reſpects, be more ſerviceable to religion by continuing a layman: "His having no intereſts with reſpect to religion, beſides thoſe which concerned his own happineſs, would add a weight to the arguments he adduced in its vindication. He knew the free thinkers fortified themſelves againſt all that was ſaid by men of the clerical profeſſion, by alledging, that it was their trade, and that they were paid for it; he hoped, therefore, that he might have the more influence, the leſs he ſhared in the patrimony of the church."

Mr. Locke, whoſe accurate talent in reaſoning is ſo much celebrated even by the ſceptics and infidels, ſhewed his zeal for chriſtianity in the early part of his life, by publiſhing a diſcourſe to demonſtrate the reaſonableneſs of believing Jeſus to be the promiſed Meſſiah; and, in the laſt years of his life, by a very judicious commentary upon ſeveral of the epiſtles of St. Paul.

He ſpeaks of the miracles wrought by our Saviour and his

apoſtles, in the moſt convincing manner, both as facts demonſtrably true, and as the cleareſt evidences of a divine miſſion. His words are theſe: "The evidence of our Saviour's miſſion from heaven is ſo great, in the multitude of miracles he did before all ſorts of people (which the divine providence and wiſdom has ſo ordered, that they never were, nor could be denied, by any of the enemies and oppoſers of chriſtianity) that what he delivered cannot but be received as the oracles of God, and unqueſtionable verity." And again; "After his reſurrection, he ſent his apoſtles among the nations, accompanied with miracles which were done in all parts, ſo frequently, and before ſo many witneſſes, that the enemies of chriſtianity have never dared to deny them; no, not Julian himſelf, who neither wanted ſkill nor power to inquire into the truth; nor would have failed to have proclaimed and expoſed it, if he could have detected any falſhood in the hiſtory of the goſpel, or found the leaſt ground to queſtion the matter of fact publiſhed by Chriſt and his apoſtles. The number and evidence of the miracles done by our Saviour and his followers, by the power and force of truth, bore down this mighty and accompliſhed Emperor, and all his parts, in his own dominions. He durſt not deny ſo plain a matter of fact; which being granted, the truth of our Saviour's doctrine and miſſion unavoidably follows, notwithſtanding whatever artful ſuggeſtions wit could invent, or malice offer to the contrary."

To thoſe who aſk, 'What need was there of a Saviour? What advantage have we by Jeſus Chriſt?' Mr. Locke replies, "It is enough to juſtify the fitneſs of any thing to be done, by reſolving it into the wiſdom of God, who has done it; whereof our narrow underſtandings, and ſhort views, may incapacitate us to judge. We know little of this viſible, and nothing at all of the ſtate of that intellectual world, (wherein are infinite numbers and degrees of ſpirits, out of the reach of our comprehenſion), and therefore know not what tranſactions there were between God and our Saviour, in reference to his kingdom. We know not what need there was to ſet up a head and a chieftain, in oppoſition to the prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air, &c. whereof there are plain intimations in ſcripture. And we ſhall take too much upon us if we ſhall call God's wiſdom or providence to account, and arrogantly condemn as needleſs, all that our weak, and perhaps biaſſed underſtanding cannot account for." And then he ſhews at large the neceſſity there was for the goſpel revelation, to deliver the world from the miſerable ſtate of darkneſs and ignorance that mankind were in; 1. As to the true knowledge of God; 2. As to the worſhip to be paid him; 3. As to the duties to be performed to him. To which he adds, the

mighty

mighty aids and encouragement to the performance of our duty; 1. From the aſſurance the goſpel gives of future rewards and puniſhments; and, 2. From the promiſe of the ſpirit of God to direct and aſſiſt us.

The holy ſcriptures are every where mentioned by him with the greateſt reverence; he calls them "The holy books, the ſacred text, holy writ, and divine revelation;" and exhorts chriſtians "to betake themſelves in earneſt to the ſtudy of the way to ſalvation, in theſe holy writings, wherein God has revealed it from heaven, and propoſed it to the world; ſeeking our religion where we are ſure it is in truth to be found, comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual." And, in a letter written the year before his death, to one who had aſked this queſtion, "What is the ſhorteſt and ſureſt way for a young perſon to attain to a true knowledge of the chriſtian religion, in the full and juſt extent?" His anſwer is, "Let him ſtudy the holy ſcripture, eſpecially the New Teſtament. Therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author; ſalvation for its end; and truth without any mixture of error, for its matter." A direction that was copied from his own practice, in the latter part of his life, and after his retirement from buſineſs; when for fourteen or fifteen years, he applied himſelf eſpecially to the ſtudy of the holy ſcriptures, and employed the laſt years of his life ſcarcely in any thing elſe. "He was never weary of admiring the great views of that ſacred book, and the juſt relation of all its parts. He every day made diſcoveries in it, that gave him freſh cauſe of admiration."

Of St. Paul in particular, upon ſeveral of whoſe epiſtles he drew up a moſt uſeful commentary, he ſays, "That he was miraculouſly called to the miniſtry of the goſpel, and declared to be a choſen veſſel; That he had the whole doctrine of the goſpel from God, by immediate revelation; That for his information in the chriſtian knowledge, and the myſteries and depths of the diſpenſation of God, by Jeſus Chriſt, God himſelf had condeſcended to be his inſtructor and teacher; that he had received the light of the goſpel, from the fountain and father of light himſelf; and, that an exact obſervation of his reaſonings and inferences is the only ſafe guide for the right underſtanding of him, under the ſpirit of God, that directed theſe ſacred writings."

And the death of this great man was agreeable to his life. For we are informed, by one who was with him when he died, and had lived in the ſame family for ſeven years before, that the day before his death he particularly exhorted all about him to read the holy ſcriptures; that he deſired to be remembered by them at evening prayers; that an occaſion offering to ſpeak of the goodneſs of God, he eſpecially exalted the love which God ſhewed to

man,

man, in juſtifying him by faith in Jeſus Chriſt; and returned God thanks in particular for having called him to the knowledge of that divine Saviour.

About two months before his death he drew up a letter to a certain gentleman (who afterwards diſtinguiſhed himſelf by a very different way of thinking and writing), and left this direction upon it, "To be delivered to him after my deceaſe." In it are theſe remarkable words: "This life is a ſcene of vanity that ſoon paſſes away, and affords no ſolid ſatisfaction, but in the conſciouſneſs of doing well, and in the hopes of another life. This is what I can ſay upon experience, and what you will find to be true, when you come to make up the account."

Sir Iſaac Newton, univerſally acknowledged to be the ableſt philoſopher and mathematician that this or any other nation has produced, is alſo well known to have been a firm believer, and a ſerious chriſtian. His diſcoveries concerning the frame and ſyſtem of the univerſe, were applied by him, as Mr. Boyle's enquiries into nature, had been, to demonſtrate againſt atheiſts of all kinds, the being of a God, and to illuſtrate his power and wiſdom in the creation of the world. Of which no better account can be given, than in the words of an ingenious perſon who has been much converſant in his philoſophical writings. "At the end of his mathematical principles of natural philoſophy, he has given us his thoughts concerning the Deity; wherein he firſt obſerves, that the ſimilitude found in all parts of the univerſe, makes it undoubted, that the whole is governed by one ſupreme Being, to whom the original is owing of the frame of nature, which evidently is the effect of choice and deſign. He then proceeds briefly to ſtate the beſt metaphyſical notions concerning God. In ſhort, we cannot conceive either of ſpace or time otherwiſe than as neceſſarily exiſting; this Being, therefore, on whom all others depend, muſt certainly exiſt by the ſame neceſſity of nature. Conſequently, wherever ſpace and time is found, there God muſt alſo be. And, as it appears impoſſible to us, that ſpace ſhould be limited, or that time ſhould have had a beginning, the Deity muſt be both immenſe and eternal."

This great man applied himſelf with the utmoſt attention to the ſtudy of the holy ſcriptures, and conſidered the ſeveral parts of them with an uncommon exactneſs; particularly, as to the order of time, and the ſeries of prophecies and events relating to the Meſſiah. Upon which ſubject he left behind him an elaborate diſcourſe, to prove that the famous prophecy of Danial's weeks, which had been ſo induſtriouſly perverted by deiſts, was an expreſs prophecy of the coming of the Meſſiah, and fulfilled in Jeſus Chriſt.

Mr.

Mr. Addiſon, ſo deſervedly celebrated for uncommon accuracy in thinking and reaſoning, has given abundant proof of his firm belief of chriſtianity, and his zeal againſt infidels of all kinds, in the arguments adduced in this work.

We mention not theſe great names, nor the teſtimonies they have given of their firm belief of the truth of chriſtianity, as if the evidences of our religion were to be finally reſolved into human authority, or tried in any other way than by the known and eſtabliſhed rules of right reaſon: but the deſign in mentioning them, is,

1. To ſhew the great preſumption of thoſe who would make the belief of revelation inconſiſtent with the uſe of reaſon; though they have known ſo many eminent inſtances of the greateſt reaſoners, not only believing revelation, but zealouſly concerned to eſtabliſh and propagate the belief of it.

2. The remembrance of this will alſo be a means, on one hand, to hinder well-diſpoſed perſons from being miſled by the vain boaſts of our modern pretenders to reaſon; and, on the other hand, to check the inclination of the wicked and vicious to be miſled; when both of them have before their eyes ſuch eminent inſtances of ſound reaſoning and a firm faith joined together in one and the ſame mind.

3. Further, as theſe were Perſons generally eſteemed for virtue and goodneſs, and, notwithſtanding their high attainments, remarkable for their modeſty and humility; their examples ſhew us, that a ſtrong and clear reaſon naturally leads to the belief of revelation, when it is not under the influences of vice, or pride.

4. And, finally, as they are all Laymen, there is no room for the enemies of revealed religion to alledge that they were prejudiced by intereſt, or ſecular conſiderations of any kind. A ſuggeſtion that has really no weight, when urged againſt the writings of the clergy in defence of revelation, ſince they do not deſire to be credited upon their own authority, but upon the reaſons they offer; and lawyers and phyſicians are not leſs credited becauſe they live by their profeſſions; but it is a ſuggeſtion that eaſily takes poſſeſſion of weak minds, and eſpecially ſuch as catch at objections, and are willing to be caught by them. And, conſidering the diligence of opponents in making proſelytes, and drawing men from the faith of Chriſt; equal diligence is required of thoſe who are to maintain that faith, not only to leave men no real ground, but even no colour or pretence, for their infidelity.

The following diſcourſes, except that concerning the evidences of the chriſtian religion, were all publiſhed in ſeparate papers, ſome years ago, and afterwards collected into volumes, with marks of diſtinction at the end of many of them, to point out the

writers.

writers. Mr. Addiſon's are there diſtinguiſhed by ſome one of the letters of the word CLIO; and the ſame marks of diſtinction are here continued; as are alſo the reſt, where any letter was found at the end of the diſcourſe.

In thoſe volumes, they ſtand according to the order of time in which they were at firſt ſeparately publiſhed, without any connection as to the matter contained in them; but here, the ſeveral diſcourſes on the ſame ſubject, which lie diſperſed in thoſe papers, are reduced to their proper heads, and put into one view, that the whole may be more regularly read, and each head may leave a more laſting impreſſion upon the mind of the reader.

EVIDENCES
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

SECTION I.

I. *General diviſion of the following diſcourſe, with regard to Pagan and Jewiſh authors, who mention particulars relating to our Saviour.*—II. *Not probable that any ſuch ſhould be mentioned by Pagan writers who lived at the ſame time, from the nature of ſuch tranſactions.*—III. *Eſpecially when related by the Jews.*—IV. *And heard at a diſtance by thoſe who pretend to as great miracles of their own.*—V. *Beſides that, no Pagan writers of that age lived in Judæa, or its confines;*—VI. *And becauſe many books of that age are loſt.*—VII. *An inſtance of one record proved to be authentic.*—VIII. *A ſecond record of probable, though not undoubted authority.*

I. THAT I may lay before you a full ſtate of the ſubject under our conſideration, and methodize the ſeveral particulars that I touched upon in diſcourſe with you; I ſhall firſt take notice of ſuch Pagan authors as have given their teſtimony to the hiſtory of our Saviour; reduce theſe authors under their reſpective claſſes, and ſhew what authority their teſtimonies carry with them. Secondly, I ſhall take notice of Jewiſh* authors in the ſame light.

II. There are many reaſons why you ſhould not expect that matters of ſuch a wonderful nature ſhould be taken notice of by thoſe eminent Pagan writers who were cotemporaries with Jeſus Chriſt, or by thoſe who lived before his Diſciples had perſonally appeared among them, and aſcertained the report which had gone abroad concerning a life ſo full of miracles.

Suppoſing ſuch things had happened at this day in Switzerland, or among the Griſons, who make a greater figure in Europe than Judæa did in the Roman Empire, would they be immediately believed by thoſe who live at a great

* The Author did not live to write this ſecond part.

great distance from them? or would any certain account of them be transmitted into foreign countries, within so short a space of time as that of our Saviour's public ministry? Such kinds of news, though never so true, seldom gain credit, till some time after they are transacted and exposed to the examination of the curious, who, by laying together circumstances, attestations, and characters, of those who are concerned in them, either receive, or reject, what at first none but eye-witnesses could absolutely believe or disbelieve. In a case of this sort, it was natural for men of sense and learning to treat the whole account as fabulous, or at fartheſt, to suspend their belief of it, until all things stood together in their full light.

III. Besides, the Jews were branded not only for superstitions different from all the religions of the Pagan world, but in a particular manner ridiculed for being a credulous people; so that whatever reports of such a nature came out of that country, were looked upon as false, frivolous, and improbable.

IV. We may further observe, that the ordinary practice of magic in those times, with the many pretended prodigies, divinations, apparitions, and local miracles among the Heathens, made them less attentive to such news from Judæa, till they had time to consider the nature, the occasion, and the end of our Saviour's miracles, and were awakened by many surprising events to allow them any consideration at all.

V. We are indeed told by St. Matthew, that the fame of our Saviour, during his life, went throughout all Syria, and that there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, Judæa, Decapolis, Idumæa, from beyond Jordan, and from Tyre and Sidon. Now had there been any historians of those times and places, we might have expected to have seen in them some account of those wonderful transactions in Judæa; but there is not any single author extant, in any kind, of that age, in any of those countries.

VI. How many books have perished in which possibly there might have been mention of our Saviour? Look among

among the Romans, how few of their writings are come down to our times? In the ſpace of two hundred years from our Saviour's birth, when there was ſuch a multitude of writers in all kinds, how ſmall is the number of authors that have made their way to the preſent age?

VII. One authentic record, and that the moſt authentic Heathen record, we are pretty ſure is loſt. I mean the account ſent by the governor of Judæa, under whom our Saviour was judged, condemned, and crucified. It was the cuſtom in the Roman Empire, as it is to this day in all the governments of the world, for the præfects and viceroys of diſtant provinces to tranſmit to their ſovereign a ſummary relation of every thing remarkable in their adminiſtration. That Pontius Pilate, in his account, would have touched on ſo extraordinary an event in Judæa, is not to be doubted; and that he actually did, we learn from Juſtin Martyr, who lived about an hundred years after our Saviour's death, reſided, made converts, and ſuffered martyrdom at Rome, where he was engaged with philoſophers, and in a particular manner with Creſcens the Cynic, who could eaſily have detected, and would not fail to have expoſed him, had he quoted a record not in being, or made any falſe citation out of it. Would the great Apologiſt have challenged Creſcens to diſpute the cauſe of chriſtianity with him before the Roman Senate, had he forged ſuch an evidence? or would Creſcens have refuſed the challenge, could he have triumphed over him in the detection of ſuch a forgery? To which we muſt add, that the apology, which appeals to this record, was preſented to a learned Emperor, and to the whole body of the Roman Senate. This father, in his apology, ſpeaking of the death and ſuffering of our Saviour, refers the Emperor for the truth of what he ſays to the acts of Pontius Pilate, which I have here mentioned. Tertullian, who wrote his apology about fifty years after Juſtin, doubtleſs referred to the ſame record, when he tells the governor of Rome, that the Emperor Tiberius having received an account out of Paleſtine in Syria of the Divine Perſon, who had appeared in that country, paid him a

particular regard, and threatened to puniſh any who ſhould accuſe the chriſtians; nay, that the Emperor would have adopted him among the Deities whom he worſhipped, had not the Senate refuſed to come into his propoſal.—Tertullian, who gives us this hiſtory, was not only one of the moſt learned men of his age, but, what adds a greater weight to his authority in this caſe, was eminently ſkilful and well read in the laws of the Roman Empire. Nor can it be ſaid, that Tertullian grounded his quotation upon the authority of Juſtin Martyr, becauſe we find he mixes it with matters of fact which are not related by that author. Euſebius mentions the ſame ancient record, but as it was not extant in his time, I ſhall not inſiſt upon his authority in this point. If it be objected that this particular is not mentioned in any Roman hiſtorian, I ſhall uſe the ſame argument in a parallel caſe, and ſee whether it will carry any force with it. Ulpian, the great Roman lawyer, gathered together all the Imperial Edicts that had been made againſt the chriſtians. But did any one ever ſay that there had been no ſuch edicts becauſe they were not mentioned in the hiſtories of thoſe Emperors? Beſides, who knows but this circumſtance of Tiberius was mentioned in other hiſtorians that have been loſt, though not to be found in any ſtill extant? Has not Suetonius many particulars of this Emperor omitted by Tacitus, and Herodian many that are not ſo much as hinted at by either? As for the ſpurious acts of Pilate, now extant, we know the occaſion and time of their writing, and had there not been a true and authentic record of this nature, they would never have been forged.

VIII. The ſtory of Agbarus, king of Edeſſa, relating to the letter which he ſent to our Saviour, and to that which he received from him, is a record of great authority: and though I will not inſiſt upon it, may venture to ſay, that had we ſuch an evidence for any fact in Pagan hiſtory, an author would be thought very unreaſonable who ſhould reject it. I believe you will be of my opinion, if you will peruſe, with other authors, who have

appeared

appeared in vindication of these letters as genuine, the additional arguments, which have been made use of by the late famous and learned Dr. Grabe, in the second volume of his Spicilegium.

SECTION II.

I. *What facts in the history of our Saviour might be taken notice of by Pagan authors.*—II. *What particular facts are taken notice of, and by what Pagan authors.* III. *How Celsus represented our Saviour's miracles.*—IV. *The same representation made of them by other unbelievers, and proved unreasonable.*—V. *What facts in our Saviour's history not to be expected from Pagan writers.*

I. WE now come to consider what undoubted authorities are extant among Pagan writers; and here we must premise, that some parts of our Saviour's history may be reasonably expected from Pagans. I mean such parts as might be known to those who lived at a distance from Judæa, as well as those who were the followers and eye-witnesses of Christ.

II. Such particulars are most of these which follow, and which are all attested by some one or other of those heathen authors who lived in or near the age of our Saviour and his disciples. 'That Augustus Cæsar had 'ordered the whole empire to be censed or taxed,' which brought our Saviour's reputed parents to Bethlehem: this is mentioned several Roman historians, as Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dion. 'That a great light, or a new 'star, appeared in the east, which directed the wise men 'to our Saviour.' This is recorded by Chalcidius. 'That Herod, the king of Palestine, so often mentioned 'in the Roman history, made a great slaughter of inno-'cent children,' being so jealous of his successor, that he put to death his own sons on that account. This character of him is given by several historians; and this cruel fact mentioned by Macrobius, a heathen author, who tells it as a known thing, without any mark or doubt upon it, 'That our Saviour had been in Egypt.' This Celsus, though he raises a monstrous story upon it, is so far from

denying, that he tells us our Saviour learned the arts of magic in that country. 'That Pontius Pilate was 'governor of Judea; that our Saviour was brought in 'judgment before him, and by him condemned and cru-'cified:' This is recorded by Tacitus. 'That many 'miraculous cures, and works out of the ordinary courſe 'of nature, were wrought by him:' This is confeſſed by Julian the apoſtate, Porphyry, and Hierocles, all of them not only pagans, but profeſſed enemies and perſecutors of chriſtianity. 'That our Saviour foretold ſeveral 'things which came to paſs according to his predictions:' This was atteſted by Phlegon, in his annals, as we are aſſured by the learned Origen againſt Celſus. 'That at 'the time when our Saviour died, there was a miraculous 'darkneſs, and a great earthquake:' This is recorded 'by the ſame Phlegon, the Trallian, who was likewiſe a pagan, and freeman to Adrian the emperor. We may here obſerve, that a native of Trallium, which was not ſituate at ſo great a diſtance from Paleſtine, might very probably be informed of ſuch remarkable events as had paſſed among the Jews in the age immediately preceding his own times, ſince ſeveral of his countrymen with whom he had converſed, might have received a confuſed report of our Saviour before his crucifixion, and probably lived within the ſhake of the earthquake, and the ſhadow of the eclipſe, which are recorded by this author. 'That 'Chriſt was worſhipped as a God among the Chriſtians; 'that they would rather ſuffer death than blaſpheme 'him; that they received a ſacrament, and by it en-'tered into a vow of abſtaining from ſin and wicked-'neſs;' conforming to the advice given by St. Paul: 'that they had private aſſemblies of worſhip, and uſed 'to join together in hymns:' This is the account which Pliny the younger gives of chriſtianity in his days, about ſeventy years after the death of Chriſt, and which agrees in all its circumſtances with the accounts we have in holy writ, of the firſt ſtate of chriſtianity after the crucifixion of our Bleſſed Saviour. 'That St. Peter, whoſe mira-'cles are many of them recorded in holy writ, did many

'wonderful

'wonderful works,' is owned by Julian the apoſtate, who therefore repreſents him as a great magician, and one who had in his poſſeſſion a book of magical ſecrets, left him by our Saviour. 'That the devils or 'evil ſpirits were ſubject to him,' we may learn from Porphyry, who objects to chriſtianity, that ſince Jeſus had begun to be worſhipped, Æſculapius and the reſt of the gods did no more converſe with men. Nay, Celſus himſelf affirms the ſame thing in effect, when he ſays, that the power which ſeemed to reſide in chriſtians, proceeded from the uſe of certain names, and the invocation of certain dæmons. Origen remarks on this paſſage, that the author doubtleſs hints at thoſe chriſtians who put to flight evil ſpirits and healed thoſe who were poſſeſſed with them; a fact which had been often ſeen, and which he himſelf had ſeen, as he declares in another part of his diſcourſe againſt Celſus; but at the ſame time he aſſures us, that this miraculous power was exerted by the uſe of no other name but that of Jeſus, to which were added ſeveral paſſages in his hiſtory, but nothing like any invocation to dæmons.

III. Celſus was ſo hard ſet with the report of our Saviour's miracles, and the confident atteſtations concerning him, that though he often intimates he did not believe them to be true, yet knowing he might be ſilenced in ſuch an anſwer, provides himſelf with another retreat, when beaten out of this; namely, that our Saviour was a magician. Thus he compares the feeding of ſo many thouſands at two different times with a few loaves and fiſhes, to the magical feaſts of thoſe Egyptian impoſtors, who would preſent their ſpectators with viſionary entertainments that had in them neither ſubſtance nor reality: which, by the way, is to ſuppoſe, that a hungry and fainting multitude were filled by an apparition, or ſtrengthened and refreſhed with ſhadows. He knew very well that there were ſo many witneſſes and actors, if I may call them ſuch, in theſe two miracles, that it was impoſſible to refute ſuch multitudes, who had, doubtleſs, ſufficiently ſpread the fame of them, and was therefore

in this place forced to reſort to the other ſolution, that it was done by magic. It was not enough to ſay that a miracle which appeared to ſo many thouſand eye-witneſſes was a forgery of Chriſt's diſciples, and therefore ſuppoſing them to be eye-witneſſes, he endeavours to ſhew how they might be deceived.

IV. The unconverted heathens, who were preſſed by the many authorities that confirmed our Saviour's miracles, as well as the unbelieving Jews, who had actually ſeen them, were driven to account for them after the ſame manner: for, to work by magic, in the heathen way of ſpeaking, was in the language of the Jews to caſt out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. Our Saviour, who knew that unbelievers in all ages would put this perverſe interpretation on his miracles, has branded the malignity of thoſe men who, contrary to the dictates of their own hearts, ſtarted ſuch an unreaſonable objection, as a blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and declared not only the guilt, but the puniſhment of ſo black a crime. At the ſame time he condeſcended to ſhew the vanity and emptineſs of this objection againſt his miracles, by repreſenting that they evidently tended to the deſtruction of thoſe powers, to whoſe aſſiſtance the enemies of his doctrine then aſcribed them. An argument, which if duly weighed, renders the objection ſo very frivolous and groundleſs, that we may venture to call it even blaſphemy againſt common ſenſe. Would magic endeavour to draw off the minds of men from the worſhip which was paid to ſtocks and ſtones, to give them an abhorrence of thoſe evil ſpirits, who rejoiced in the moſt cruel ſacrifices, and in offerings of the greateſt impurity; and, in ſhort, to call upon mankind to exert their whole ſtrength in the love and adoration of that one Being from whom they derived their exiſtence, and on whom only they were taught to depend every moment for the happineſs and continuance of it? Was it the buſineſs of magic to humanize our natures with compaſſion, forgiveneſs, and all the inſtances of the moſt extenſive charity? Would evil ſpirits contribute to make men ſober, chaſte and tempe-

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rate, and, in a word, to produce that reformation, which was wrought in the moral world by thoſe doctrines of our Saviour, that received their ſanction from his miracles? Nor is it poſſible to imagine, that evil ſpirits would enter into a combination with our Saviour to cut off all their correſpondence and intercourſe with mankind, and to prevent any for the future from addicting themſelves to thoſe rights and ceremonies which had done them ſo much honour. We ſee the early effect which chriſtianity had on the minds of men in this particular, by that number of books, which were filled with the ſecrets of magic, and made a ſacrifice to chriſtianity, by the converts mentioned in the Acts of the Apoſtles. We have likewiſe an eminent inſtance of the inconſiſtency of our religion with magic, in the hiſtory of the famous Aquila. This perſon, who was a kinſman of the Emperor Trajan, and likewiſe a man of great learning, notwithſtanding he had embraced chriſtianity, could not be brought off from the ſtudies of magic, by the repeated admonitions of his fellow chriſtians; ſo that at length they expelled him their ſociety, as rather chuſing to loſe the reputation of ſo conſiderable a proſelyte, than communicate with one who dealt in ſuch dark and infernal practices. Beſides, we may obſerve, that all the favourers of magic were the moſt profeſſed and bitter enemies to the Chriſtian Religion. Not to mention Simon Magus, and many others, I ſhall only take notice of thoſe two great perſecutors of chriſtianity, the emperors Adrian and Julian the apoſtate, both of them initiated in the myſteries of divination, and ſkilled in all the depths of magic. I ſhall only add, that evil ſpirits cannot be ſuppoſed to have concurred in the eſtabliſhment of religion, which triumphed over them, drove them out of the places they poſſeſt, and diveſted them of their influence on mankind; nor would I mention this particular, though it be unanimouſly reported by all the chriſtian authors, did it not apppear, from the authorities above cited, that this was a fact conſeſt by Heathens themſelves.

V. We now ſee what a multitude of Pagan teſtimonies

nies may he produced for all thoſe remarkable paſſages, which might have been expected from them, and, indeed, of ſeveral that I believe do more than anſwer your expectation, as they were not ſubjects in their own nature ſo expoſed to public notoriety. It cannot be expected they ſhould mention particulars which were tranſacted among the diſciples only, or among ſome few even of the diſciples themſelves; ſuch as the transfiguration, the agony in the garden, the appearance of Chriſt after his reſurrection, and others of the like nature. It was impoſſible for a heathen author to relate theſe things, becauſe if he had believed them, he would no longer have been a heathen, and by that means his teſtimony would not have been thought of ſo much validity. Beſides, his very report of facts ſo favourable to chriſtianity would have prompted men to ſay that he was probably tainted with their doctrine. We have a parallel caſe in Hecatæus, a famous Greek Hiſtorian, who had ſeveral paſſages in his book conformable to the hiſtory of the Jewiſh writers, which, when quoted by Joſephus, as a confirmation of the Jewiſh hiſtory, when his heathen adverſaries could give no other anſwer to it, they would need ſuppoſe that Hecatæus was a Jew in his heart, though they had no other reaſon for it but becauſe his hiſtory gave greater authority to the Jewiſh than to the Egyptian records.

SECTION III.

I. *Introduction to a ſecond liſt of Pagan authors, who give teſtimony of our Saviour.*—II. *A Paſſage concerning our Saviour, from a learned Athenian.*—III. *His converſion from Paganiſm to Chriſtianity makes his evidence ſtronger than if he had continued a Pagan.*—IV. *Of another Athenian Philoſopher converted to Chriſtianity.*—V. *Why their converſion, inſtead of weakening, ſtrengthens their evidence in defence of Chriſtianity.*—VI. *Their belief in our Saviour's hiſtory founded at firſt upon the principles of hiſtorical faith.*—VII. *Their teſtimonies extended to all the particulars of our Saviour's hiſtory.*—VIII. *As related by the four Evangeliſts.*

TO

I. TO this liſt of heathen writers, who make mention of our Saviour, or touch upon any particulars of his life, I ſhall add thoſe authors who were at firſt heathens, and afterwards converted to Chriſtianity; upon which account, as I ſhall here ſhew, their teſtimonies are to be looked upon as more authentic. And in this liſt of evidences, I ſhall confine myſelf to ſuch learned Pagans as came over to chriſtianity in the three firſt centuries, becauſe thoſe were the times in which men had the beſt means of informing themſelves of the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, and becauſe, among the great number of philoſophers who came in afterwards under the reigns of Chriſtian Emperors, there might be ſeveral who did it partly out of wordly motives.

II. Let us now ſuppoſe that a learned heathen writer who lived within ſixty years of our Saviour's Crucifixion, after having ſhewn that falſe miracles were generally wrought in obſcurity, and before few or no witneſſes, ſpeaking of thoſe which were wrought by our Saviour, has the following paſſage: 'But his works were 'always ſeen, becauſe they were true; they were ſeen 'by thoſe who were healed, and by thoſe who were raiſed 'from the dead. Nay, theſe perſons who were thus 'healed, and raiſed, were ſeen not only at the time of 'their being healed, and raiſed, but long afterwards. 'Nay, they were not ſeen only all the while our Saviour 'was upon earth, but ſurvived after his departure out 'of this world; nay, ſome of them were living in our 'days.'

III. I dare ſay you would look upon this as a glorious atteſtation for the cauſe of Chriſtianity, had it come from the hand of a famous Athenian philoſopher. Theſe forementioned words, however, are actually the words of one who lived about ſixty years after our Saviour's Crucifixion, and was a famous philoſopher in Athens: but it will be ſaid, he was a convert to Chriſtianity. Now conſider this matter impartially, and ſee if his teſtimony is not much more valid for that reaſon. Had he continued a Pagan philoſopher, would not the world have

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ſaid that he was not ſincere in what he writ, or did not believe it? for if ſo, would nor they have told us he would have embraced Chriſtianity? This was, indeed, the caſe of this excellent man: he had ſo thoroughly examined the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, and the excellency of that religion which he taught, and was ſo entirely convinced of both, that he became a proſelyte, and died a martyr.

IV. Ariſtides was an Athenian philoſopher, at the ſame time famed for his learning and wiſdom, but converted to chriſtianity. As it cannot be queſtioned that he peruſed and approved the apology of Quadratus, in which is the paſſage juſt now cited, he joined with him in an apology of his own to the ſame Emperor, on the ſame ſubject. This apology, though now loſt, was extant in the time of Ado Vinnenſis, A. D. 870, and highly eſteemed by the moſt learned Athenians, as that author witneſſes. It muſt have contained great arguments for the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, becauſe in it he aſſerted the divinity of our Saviour, which could not but engage him in the proof of his miracles.

V. I do allow that, generally ſpeaking, a man is not ſo acceptable and unqueſtioned an evidence in facts which make for the advancement of his own party. But we muſt conſider, that in the caſe before us, the perſons to whom we appeal were of an oppoſite party, till they were perſuaded of the truth of thoſe very facts which they report. They bear evidence to a hiſtory in defence of Chriſtianity, the truth of which hiſtory was their motive to embrace Chriſtianity. They atteſt facts which they had heard while they were yet heathens, and had they not found reaſon to believe them, they would ſtill have continued heathens, and have made no mention of them in their writings.

VI. When a man is born under Chriſtian parents, and trained up in the profeſſion of that religion from a child, he generally guides himſelf by the rules of Chriſtian faith, in believing what is delivered by the Evangeliſts: but the learned Pagans of antiquity before they became

Chriſtians

Chriſtians, were only guided by the common rules of hiſtorical faith; that is, they examined the nature of the evidence which was to be met with in common fame, tradition, and the writings of thoſe perſons who related them, together with the number, concurrence, veracity, and private characters of thoſe perſons; and being convinced upon all accounts that they had the ſame reaſon to believe the hiſtory of our Saviour, as that of any other perſon to which they themſelves were not actually eye-witneſſes, they were bound by all the rules of hiſtorical faith, and of right reaſon, to give credit to this hiſtory. This they did accordingly, and in conſequence of it publiſhed the ſame truths themſelves, ſuffered many afflictions, and very often death itſelf, in the aſſertion of them. When I ſay that an hiſtorical belief of the acts of our Saviour induced theſe learned Pagans to embrace his doctrine, I do not deny that there were many other motives which conduced to it; as the excellency of his precepts, the fulfilling of prophecies, the miracles of his diſciples, the irreproachable lives and magnanimous ſufferings of their followers, with other conſiderations of the ſame nature: but whatever other collateral arguments wrought more or leſs with philoſophers of that age, it is certain that a belief in the hiſtory of our Saviour was one motive with every new convert, and that upon which all others turned, as being the very baſis and foundation of Chriſtianity.

VII. To this I muſt further add, that as we have already ſeen many particular facts which are recorded in Holy Writ, atteſted by particular Pagan authors: the teſtimony of thoſe I am now going to produce, extends to the whole hiſtory of our Saviour, and to that continued ſeries of actions which are related of him and his diſciples in the books of the New Teſtament.

VIII. This evidently appears from their quotations out of the Evangeliſts, for the confirmation of any doctrine or account of our Bleſſed Saviour. Nay, a learned man of our nation, who examined the writings of our moſt ancient fathers in another view, refers to ſeveral

paſſages

paſſages in Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, and Cyprian, by which he plainly ſhews, that each of theſe early writers inſcribed to the four Evangeliſts by name their reſpective hiſtories; ſo that there is not the leaſt room for doubting of their belief in the hiſtory of our Saviour, as recorded in the Goſpels. I ſhall only add, that three of the five fathers here mentioned, and probably four, were Pagans converted to Chriſtianity, as they were all of them very inquiſitive and deep in the knowledge of heathen learning and philoſophy.

SECTION IV.

I. *Character of the times in which the Chriſtian Religion was propagated.*—II. *And of many who embraced it.*—III. *Three eminent and early inſtances.*—IV. *Multitudes of learned men who came over to it.*—V. *Belief in our Saviour's hiſtory the firſt motive to their converſion.*—VI. *The names of ſeveral Pagan Philoſophers, who were Chriſtian converts.*

I. IT happened very providentially to the honour of the Chriſtian religion, that it did not take its riſe in the dark and illiterate ages of the world, but at a time when arts and ſciences were at their height, and when there were men who made it the buſineſs of their lives to ſearch after truth, and ſift the ſeveral opinions of philoſophers and wiſe men, concerning the duty, the end, and chief happineſs of reaſonable creatures.

II. Several of theſe, therefore, when they had informed themſelves of our Saviour's hiſtory, and examined with unprejudiced minds, the doctrines and manners of his diſciples and followers, were ſo ſtruck and convinced, that they profeſſed themſelves of that ſect; notwithſtanding, by this profeſſion in that juncture of time, they bid farewel to all the pleaſures of this life, renounced all the views of ambition, engaged in an uninterrupted courſe of ſeverities, and expoſed themſelves to public hatred and contempt, to ſufferings of all kinds, and to death itſelf.

III. Of this ſort we may reckon thoſe three early converts to Chriſtianity, who each of them was a member of

a ſenate famous for its wiſdom and learning. Joſeph the Arimathean was of the Jewiſh Sanhedrim; Dionyſius, of the Athenian Areopagus; and Flavius Clemens, of the Roman Senate; nay, at the time of his death, conſul of Rome. Theſe three were ſo thoroughly ſatisfied of the truth of the Chriſtian Religion, that the firſt of them, according to all the reports of antiquity, died a martyr for it: as did the ſecond, unleſs we diſbelieve Ariſtides, his fellow-citizen and contemporary; and the third, as we are informed both by Roman and Chriſtian authors.

IV. Among thoſe innumerable multitudes, who in moſt of the known nations of the world came over to Chriſtianity at its firſt appearance, we may be ſure there were great numbers of wiſe and learned men, beſides thoſe whoſe names are in the Chriſtian records, who, without doubt, took care to examine the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, before they would leave the religion of their country and of their forefathers, for the ſake of one that would not only cut them off from the allurements of this world, but ſubject them to every thing terrible or diſagreeable in it. Tertullian tells the Roman governors, that their corporations, councils, armies, tribes, companies, the palace, ſenate, and courts of judicature, were filled with Chriſtians, as Arnobius aſſerts, that men of the fineſt parts and learning, orators, grammarians, rhetoricians, lawyers, phyſicians, philoſophers, deſpiſing the ſentiments they had been once fond of, took up their reſt in the Chriſtian religion.

V. Who can imagine that men of this character did not thoroughly inform themſelves of the hiſtory of that perſon whoſe doctrines they embraced? for, however conſonant to reaſon his precepts appeared, how good ſoever were the effects which they produced in the world, nothing could have tempted men to acknowledge him as their God and Saviour, but their being firmly perſuaded of the miracles he wrought, and the many atteſtations of his divine miſſion, which were to be met with in the hiſtory of his life. This was the groundwork of the Chriſtian religion; and, if this failed, the whole ſuperſtructure

ſunk with it. This point, therefore, of the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, as recorded by the Evangeliſts, is every where taken for granted in the writings of thoſe, who from Pagan philoſophers became Chriſtian authors, and who, by reaſon of their converſion, are to be looked upon as of the ſtrongeſt collateral teſtimony for the truth of what is delivered concerning our Saviour.

VI. Beſides innumerable authors that are loſt, we have the undoubted names, works, or fragments of ſeveral Pagan philoſophers, which ſhew them to have been as learned as any unconverted heathen authors of the age in which they lived. If we look into the greateſt nurſeries of learning in thoſe ages of the world, we find in Athens, Dionyſius, Quadratus, Ariſtides, Athenagoras; and in Alexandria, Dionyſius, Clemens, Ammonius, and Anatolius, to whom we may add Origen; for though his father was a Chriſtian martyr, he became, without all controverſy, the moſt learned and able philoſopher of his age, by his education at Alexandria, in that famous ſeminary of arts and ſciences.

SECTION V.

I. *The learned Pagans had means and opportunities of informing themſelves of the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory.*—II. *From the proceedings,*—III. *The Characters, ſufferings,*—IV. *And miracles of the perſons who publiſhed it.*—V. *How theſe firſt Apoſtles perpetuated their tradition, by ordaining perſons to ſucceed them.*—VI. *How their ſucceſſors in the three firſt centuries, preſerved their tradition.*—VII. *That five generations might derive this tradition from Chriſt, to the end of the third century.*—VIII. *Four eminent Chriſtians that delivered it down ſucceſſively to the year of our Lord,* 254.—IX. *The faith of the four above mentioned perſons the ſame with that of the churches of the Eaſt, of the Weſt, and of Egypt.*—X. *Another perſon added to them, who brings us to the year* 343, *and that many other liſts might be added in as direct and ſhort a ſucceſſion.*—XI. *Why the tradition of the three firſt centuries more authentic than that of any other age, proved from the converſation of the primitive Chriſtians.*—XII. *From the manner*

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of initiating men into their religion.—XIII. *From the correſpondence between the churches.*—XIV. *From the long lives of ſeveral of Chriſt's Diſciples, of which there are two inſtances.*

I. IT now therefore only remains to conſider whether theſe learned men had means and opportunities of informing themſelves of the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory; for unleſs this point can be made out, their teſtimonies will appear invalid, and their inquiries ineffectual.

II. As to this point, we muſt conſider, that many thouſands had ſeen the tranſactions of our Saviour in Judea, and that many hundred thouſands had received an account of them from the mouths of thoſe who were actually eye-witneſſes. I ſhall only mention among theſe eye-witneſſes the twelve Apoſtles, to whom we muſt add St. Paul, who had a particular call to this high office, though many other diſciples and followers of Chriſt had alſo their ſhare in the publiſhing this wonderful hiſtory. We learn from the ancient records of Chriſtianity, that many of the Apoſtles and Diſciples made it the expreſs buſineſs of their lives, travelled into the remoteſt parts of the world, and in all places gathered multitudes about them, to acquaint them with the hiſtory and doctrines of their crucified maſter. And, indeed, were all Chriſtian records of theſe proceedings entirely loſt, as many have been, the effect plainly evinces the truth of them; for how elſe during the Apoſtles lives could Chriſtianity have ſpread itſelf with ſuch an amazing progreſs through the ſeveral nations of the Roman empire? How could it fly like lightning, and carry conviction with it, from one end of the earth to the other?

III. Heathens therefore of every age, ſex, and quality, born in the moſt diſtant climates, and bred up under the moſt different inſtitutions, when they ſaw men of plain ſenſe, without the help of learning, armed with patience and courage, inſtead of wealth, pomp, or power, expreſſing in their lives thoſe excellent doctrines of morality, which they taught as delivered to them from our Saviour, averring that they had ſeen his miracles during

his life, and converſed with him after his death; when, I ſay, they ſaw no ſuſpicion of falſehood, treachery, or worldly intereſt, in their behaviour and converſation, and that they ſubmitted to the moſt ignominious and cruel deaths, rather than retract their teſtimony, or even be ſilent in matters which they were to publiſh by their Saviour's eſpecial command, there was no reaſon to doubt of the veracity of thoſe facts which they related, or of the Divine Miſſion in which they were employed.

IV. But even theſe motives to faith in our Saviour would not have been ſufficient to have brought about in ſo few years ſuch an incredible number of converſions, had not the Apoſtles been able to exhibit ſtill greater proofs of the truths which they taught. A few perſons of an odious and deſpiſed country could not have filled the world with believers, had they not ſhown undoubted credentials from the Divine Perſon who ſent them on ſuch a meſſage. Accordingly we are aſſured, that they were inveſted with the power of working miracles, which was the moſt ſhort and the moſt convincing argument that could be produced, and the only one that was adapted to the reaſon of all mankind, to the capacities of the wiſe and ignorant, and could overcome every cavil and every prejudice. Who would not believe that our Saviour healed the ſick, and raiſed the dead, when it was publiſhed by thoſe who themſelves often did the ſame miracles, in their preſence, and in his name! Could any reaſonable perſon imagine that God Almighty would arm men with ſuch powers to authorize a lie, and eſtabliſh a religion in the world which was diſpleaſing to him, or that evil ſpirits would lend them ſuch an effectual aſſiſtance to beat down vice and idolatry?

V. When the Apoſtles had formed many aſſemblies in ſeveral parts of the Pagan world, who gave credit to the glad tidings of the goſpel, that, upon their departure, the memory of what they had related might not periſh, they appointed out of theſe new converts, men of the beſt ſenſe, and of the moſt unblemiſhed lives, to preſide over theſe ſeveral aſſemblies, and to inculcate without ceaſing

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what they had heard from the mouths of these eye-witnesses.

VI. Upon the death of any of those substitutes to the Apostles and Disciples of Christ, his place was filled up with some other person of eminence for his piety and learning, and generally a member of the same church, who, after his decease was followed by another in the same manner, by which means the succession was continued in an uninterrupted line. Irenæus inform us, that every church preserved a catalogue of its bishops in the order that they succeeded one another; and (for example) produces the catalogue of those who governed the church of Rome in that character, which contains eight or nine persons, though but a very small remove from the times of the Apostles.

Indeed the lists of bishops, which are come down to us in other churches, are generally filled with greater numbers than one would expect. But the succession was quick in the three first centuries, because the bishop very often ended in the martyr: for when a persecution rose in any place, the first fury of it fell upon this order of holy men, who abundantly testified, by their deaths and sufferings, that they did not undertake these offices out of any temporal views, that they were sincere and satisfied in the belief of what they taught, and that they firmly adhered to what they had received from the Apostles, as laying down their lives in the same hope, and upon the same principles. None can be supposed so utterly regardless of their own happiness as to expire in torment, and hazard their eternity, to support any fables and inventions of their own, or any forgeries of their predecessors who had presided in the same church, and which might have been easily detected by the tradition of that particular church, as well as by the concurring testimony of others. To this purpose, I think it is very remarkable, that there was not a single martyr among those many heretics, who disagreed with the apostolical church, and introduced several wild and absurd notions into the doctrine of Christianity. They durst not stake their present and

future happineſs on their own chimerical operations, and did not only ſhun perſecution, but affirmed that it was unneceſſary for their followers to bear their religions through ſuch fiery trials.

VII. We may fairly reckon, that this firſt ſtate of Apoſtles and Diſciples, with that ſecond generation of many, who were their immediate converts, extended itſelf to the middle of the ſecond century, and that ſeveral of the third generation from theſe laſt mentioned, which was but the fifth from Chriſt, continued to the end of the third century. Did we know the ages and numbers of the members in every particular church, which was planted by the Apoſtles, I doubt not but in moſt of them there might be found five perſons who in a continued ſeries would reach through theſe three centuries of years, that is, till the 265th from the death of our Saviour.

VIII. Among the accounts of thoſe very few out of innumerable multitudes, who had embraced Chriſtianity, I ſhall ſingle out four perſons eminent for their lives, their writings, and their ſufferings, that were, ſucceſſively, contemporaries, and brings us down as far as to the year of our Lord 254. St. John, who was the beloved Diſciple, and converſed the moſt intimately with our Saviour, lived till Anno Dom. 100. Polycarp, who was the diſciple of St. John, and had converſed with others of the apoſtles and diſciples of our Lord, lived till Anno Dom. 167, though his life was ſhortened by martyrdom. Irenæus, who was the diſciple of Polycarp, and had converſed with many of the immediate diſciples of the apoſtles, lived at the loweſt computation of his age, till the year 202, when he was likewiſe cut off by martyrdom: in which year the great Origen was appointed regent of the Catechetic ſchool in Alexandria, and as he was the miracle of that age, for induſtry, learning and philoſophy, he was looked upon as the champion of Chriſtianity, till the year 254, when, if he did not ſuffer martyrdom, as ſome think he did, he was certainly actuated by the ſpirit of it, as appears in the whole courſe of his life and writings; nay, he had often been put to the torture, and had undergone

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trials worſe than death. As he converſed with the moſt eminent Chriſtians of his time in Ægypt, and in the Eaſt, brought over multitudes both from hereſy and heatheniſm, and left behind him ſeveral diſciples of great fame and learning, there is no queſtion but there were conſiderable numbers of thoſe who knew him, and had been his hearers, ſcholars, or proſelytes, that lived till the end of the third century, and to the reign of Conſtantine the Great.

IX. It is evident to thoſe who read the lives and writings of Polycarp, Irenæus, and Origen, that theſe three fathers believed the accounts which are given of our Saviour in the four Evangeliſts, and had undoubted arguments that not only St. John, but many others of our Saviour's diſciples, publiſhed the ſame account of him. To which we muſt ſubjoin this further remark, that what was believed by theſe fathers on this ſubject, was likewiſe the belief of the main body of Chriſtians in thoſe ſucceſſive ages when they flouriſhed: ſince Polycarp cannot but be looked upon, if we conſider the reſpect that was paid him, as the repreſentative of the eaſtern churches in this particular, Irenæus of the weſtern upon the ſame account, and Origen of thoſe eſtabliſhed in Ægypt.

X. To theſe I might add Paul the famous hermit, who retired from the Decian perſecution five or ſix years before Origen's death, and lived till the year 343. I have only diſcovered one of thoſe channels by which the hiſtory of our Saviour might be conveyed pure and unadulterated, through theſe ſeveral ages that produced thoſe Pagan philoſophers, whoſe teſtimonies I make uſe of for the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory. Some one or other of theſe philoſophers came into the Chriſtian faith during its infancy, in the ſeveral periods of theſe three firſt centuries, when they had ſuch means of informing themſelves in all the particulars of our Saviour's hiſtory. I muſt farther add, that though I have here only choſen this ſingle link of martyrs, I might find out others among thoſe names which are ſtill extant, that delivered down this account of our Saviour in a ſucceſſive tradition, till the whole Roman empire became Chriſtian; as there is no queſtion

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but numberleſs ſeries of witneſſes might follow one another in the ſame order, and in as ſhort a chain, and that perhaps in every ſingle church, had the names and ages of the moſt eminent primitive Chriſtians been tranſmitted to us with the like certainty.

XI. But to give this conſideration more force, we muſt take notice, that the tradition of the firſt ages of Chriſtianity had ſeveral circumſtances peculiar to it, which made it more authentic than any other tradition in any other age of the world. The Chriſtians, who carried their religion through ſo many general and particular perſecutions, were inceſſantly comforting and ſupporting one another, with the example and hiſtory of our Saviour and his apoſtles. It was the ſubject not only of their ſolemn aſſemblies, but of their private viſits and converſations. 'Our virgins,' ſays Tatian, who lived in the ſecond century, 'diſcourſe over their diſtaffs on divine ſubjects.' Indeed, when religion was woven into the civil government, and flouriſhed under the protection of the emperors, mens thoughts and diſcourſes were, as they are now, full of ſecular affairs; but in the three firſt centuries of Chriſtianity, men, who embraced this religion, had given up all their intereſts in this world, and lived in a perpetual preparation for the next, as not knowing how ſoon they might be called to it: ſo that they had little elſe to talk of but the life and doctrines of that Divine Perſon, which was their hope, their encouragement, and their glory. We cannot therefore imagine that there was a ſingle perſon, arrived at any degree of age or conſideration, who had not heard and repeated above a thouſand times in his life, all the particulars of our Saviour's birth, life, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion.

XII. Eſpecially if we conſider, that they could not then be received as Chriſtians, till they had undergone ſeveral examinations. Perſons of riper years who flocked daily into the church during the three firſt centuries, were obliged to paſs through many repeated inſtructions, and give a ſtrict account of their proficiency, before they were admitted to baptiſm. And as for thoſe who were born

born of Chriſtian parents, and had been baptiſed in their infancy, they were with the like care prepared and diſciplined for confirmation, which they could not arrive at till they were found, upon examination, to have made a ſufficient progreſs in the knowledge of Chriſtianity.

XIII. We muſt further obſerve, that there was not only in thoſe times this religious converſation among private Chriſtians, but a conſtant correſpondence between the churches that were eſtabliſhed by the apoſtles, or their ſucceſſors, in the ſeveral parts of the world. If any new doctrine was ſtarted, or any fact reported of our Saviour, a ſtrict enquiry was made among the churches, eſpecially thoſe planted by the apoſtles themſelves, whether they had received any ſuch doctrine or account of our Saviour, from the mouths of the apoſtles, or the tradition of thoſe Chriſtians who had preceded the preſent members of the churches which were thus conſulted. By this means, when any novelty was publiſhed, it was immediately detected and cenſured.

XIV. St. John, who lived ſo many years after our Saviour, was appealed to in theſe emergencies as the living oracle of the church; and as his oral teſtimony laſted the firſt century, many have obſerved that, by a particular providence of God, ſeveral of our Saviour's diſciples, and of the early converts of his religion, lived to a very great age, that they might perſonally convey the truth of the goſpel to thoſe times, which were very remote from the firſt publication of it. Of theſe, beſides St. John, we have a remarkable inſtance in Simeon, who was one of the ſeventy ſent forth by our Saviour, to publiſh the Goſpel before his crucifixion, and a near kinſman of the Lord. This venerable perſon, who had probably heard with his own ears our Saviour's prophecy of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, preſided over the church eſtabliſhed in that city, during the time of its memorable ſiege, and drew his congregation out of thoſe dreadful and unparalleled calamities which befel his countrymen, by following the advice our Saviour had given, when they ſhould ſee Jeruſalem encompaſſed with armies, and the Roman ſtandards,

ards, or abomination of deſolation, ſet up. He lived till the year of our Lord 107, when he was martyred under the Emperor Trajan.

SECTION VI.

I. The tradition of the Apoſtles ſecured by other excellent inſtitutions:—II. But chiefly by the writings of the Evangeliſts.—III. The Diligence of the Diſciples and firſt Chriſtian converts, to ſend abroad theſe writings.—IV. That the written account of our Saviour was the ſame with that delivered by tradition:—V. Proved from the reception of the Goſpel by thoſe Churches which were eſtabliſhed before it was written:—VI. From the uniformity of what was believed in the ſeveral Churches:—VII. From a remarkable paſſage in Irenæus.—VIII. Records which are now loſt, of uſe to the three firſt centuries, for confirming the hiſtory of our Saviour.—IX. Inſtances of ſuch records.

I. THUS far we ſee how the learned Pagans might apprize themſelves from oral information of the particulars of our Saviour's hiſtory. They could hear, in every church planted in every diſtant part of the earth, the account which was there received and preſerved among them, of the hiſtory of our Saviour. They could learn the names and characters of thoſe firſt miſſionaries that brought to them theſe accounts, and the miracles by which God Almighty atteſted their reports. But the Apoſtles and Diſciples of Chriſt, to preſerve the hiſtory of his life, and to ſecure their accounts of him from error and oblivion, did not only ſet aſide certain perſons for that purpoſe, as has been already ſhewn, but appropriated certain days to the commemoration of thoſe facts which they had related concerning him. The firſt day in the week was in all its returns a perpetual memorial of his reſurrection, as the devotional exerciſes adapted to Friday and Saturday, were to denote to all ages that he was crucified on the one of thoſe days, and that he reſted in the grave on the other. You may apply the ſame remark to ſeveral of the annual feſtivals inſtituted by the Apoſtles themſelves, or at furtheſt by their immediate ſucceſſors, in memory of the moſt important particulars

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in our Saviour's hiſtory; to which we muſt add the Sacraments inſtituted by our Lord himſelf, and many of thoſe rites and ceremonies which obtained in the moſt early times of the Church. Theſe are to be regarded as ſtanding marks of ſuch facts as were delivered by thoſe who were eye-witneſſes to them, and which were contrived with great wiſdom to laſt till time ſhould be no more. Theſe, without any other means, might have, in ſome meaſure, conveyed to poſterity, the memory of ſeveral tranſactions in the hiſtory of our Saviour, as they were related by his diſciples. At leaſt, the reaſon of theſe inſtitutions, though they might be forgotten, and obſcured by a long courſe of years, could not but be very well known by thoſe who lived in the three firſt centuries, and a means of informing the inquiſitive Pagans in the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, that being the view in which I am to conſider them.

II. But leſt ſuch a tradition, though guarded by ſo many expedients, ſhould wear out by the length of time, the four Evangeliſts within about fifty, or, as Theodoret affirms, thirty years after our Saviour's death, while the memory of his actions was freſh among them, conſigned to writing that hiſtory, which for ſome years had been publiſhed only by the mouths of Apoſtles and Diſciples. The further conſideration of theſe holy penmen will fall under another part of this diſcourſe.

III. It will be ſufficient to obſerve here that in the age which ſucceeded the Apoſtles, many of their immediate diſciples ſent or carried in perſon the books of the four Evangeliſts, which had been written by the Apoſtles, or at leaſt approved by them, to moſt of the churches which they had planted in the different parts of the world. This was done with ſo much diligence, that when Pantænus, a man of learning and piety, had travelled into India for the propagation of chriſtianity, about the year of our Lord 209, he found among that remote people the Goſpel of St. Matthew, which upon his return from that country he brought with him to Alexandria. This Goſpel is generally ſuppoſed to have been

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left in those parts by St. Bartholomew the Apostle of the Indies, who probably carried it with him before the writings of the three other Evangelists were published.

IV. That the history of our Saviour, as recorded by the Evangelists, was the same with that which had been before delivered by the Apostles and Disciples, will further appear in the prosecution of this discourse, and may be gathered from the following considerations.

V. Had these writings differed from the sermons of the first planters of christianity, either in history or doctrine, there is no question but they would have been rejected by those churches which they had already formed. But so consistent and uniform was the relation of the Apostles, that these histories appeared to be nothing else but their tradition and oral attestations made fixed and permanent. Thus was the fame of our Saviour, which in so few years had gone through the whole earth, confirmed and perpetuated by such records, as would preserve the traditionary account of him to after-ages; and rectify it, if, at any time, by passing through several generations, it might drop any part that was material, or contract any thing that was false or fictitious.

VI. Accordingly we find the same Jesus Christ, who was born of a Virgin, who had wrought many miracles in Palestine, who was crucified, arose again, and ascended into heaven: I say, the same Jesus Christ had been preached, and was worshipped, in Germany, France, Spain, and Great Britain, in Parthia, Media, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Asia, and Pamphilia, in Italy, Egypt, Africa, and beyond Cyrene: India and Persia, and, in short, in all the islands and provinces that are visited by the rising or setting sun. The same account of our Saviour's life and doctrine was delivered by thousands of preachers, and believed in thousands of places, who all, as fast as it could be conveyed to them, received the same account in writing from the four Evangelists.

VII. Irenæus to this purpose very aptly remarks, that those barbarous nations, who in his time were not

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poſſeſſed of the written Goſpels, and had only learned the hiſtory of our Saviour from thoſe who had converted them to chriſtianity before the Goſpels were written, had among them the ſame accounts of our Saviour, which are to be met with in the four Evangeliſts. An unconteſtable proof of the harmony and concurrence between the Holy Scipture and the tradition of the churches in thoſe early times of chriſtianity.

VIII. Thus we ſee what opportunities the learned and inquiſitive Heathens had of informing themſelves of the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, during the three firſt centuries, eſpecially as they lay nearer one than another to the fountain head: beſides which, there were many uncontroverted traditions, records of Chriſtianity, and particular hiſtories, that then threw light into theſe matters, but are now entirely loſt, by which, at that time, any appearance of contradiction, or ſeeming difficulties, in the hiſtory of the Evangeliſts, were fully cleared up and explained: though we meet with fewer appearances of this nature in the hiſtory of our Saviour, as related by the four Evangeliſts, than in the accounts of any other perſon, publiſhed by ſuch a number of different hiſtorians who lived at ſo great a diſtance from the preſent age.

IX. Among thoſe records which are loſt, and were of great uſe to the primitive chriſtians, is the letter to Tiberius, which I have already mentioned; that of Marcus Aurelius, which I ſhall take notice of hereafter; the writings of Hegeſippus, who had drawn down the hiſtory of Chriſtianity to his own time, which was not beyond the middle of the ſecond century; the genuine Sibylline oracles, which in the firſt ages of the church were eaſily diſtinguiſhed from the ſpurious; the records preſerved in particular churches, with many others of the ſame nature.

SECTION VII.

I. *The ſight of miracles in thoſe ages a further confirmation of Pagan philoſophers in the Chriſtian faith.*—II. *The credibility of ſuch miracles.*—III. *A particular inſtance,*

ſtance.—IV. *Martyrdom, why conſidered as a ſtanding miracle.*—V. *Primitive Chriſtians thought many of the martyrs were ſupported by a miraculous power.*—VI. *Proved from the nature of their ſufferings.*—VII. *How martyrs further induced the Pagans to embrace Chriſtianity.*

I. THERE were other means, which I find had a great influence on the learned of the three firſt centuries, to create and confirm in them the belief of our bleſſed Saviour's hiſtory, which ought not to be paſſed over in ſilence. The firſt was, the opportunity they enjoyed of examining thoſe miracles, which were on ſeveral occaſions performed by chriſtians, and appeared in the church, more or leſs, during theſe firſt ages of chriſtianity. Theſe had great weight with the men I am now ſpeaking of, who, from learned Pagans, became Fathers of the church; for they frequently boaſt of them in their writings, as atteſtations given by God himſelf to the truth of their religion.

II. At the ſame time that theſe learned men declare how diſingenuous, baſe, and wicked it would be, how much beneath the dignity of philoſophy, and contrary to the precepts of Chriſtianity, to utter falſehoods or forgeries in the ſupport of a cauſe, though never ſo juſt in itſelf, they confidently aſſert this miraculous power, which then ſubſiſted in the church, nay, tell us that they themſelves had been eye-witneſſes of it at ſeveral times, and in ſeveral inſtances; nay, appeal to the heathens themſelves for the truth of ſeveral facts they relate; nay, challenge them to be preſent at their aſſemblies, and ſatisfy themſelves, if they doubt of it; nay, we find that Pagan authors have in ſome inſtances confeſſed this miraculous power.

III. The letter of Marcus Aurelius, whoſe army was preſerved by a refreſhing ſhower, at the ſame time that his enemies were diſcomfited by a ſtorm of lightning, and which the heathen hiſtorians themſelves allowed to have been ſupernatural and the effect of magic: I ſay, this letter, which aſcribes this unexpected aſſiſtance to the prayers of the Chriſtians, who then ſerved in the army,

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would have been thought an unqueſtionable teſtimony of the miraculous power I am ſpeaking of, had it been ſtill preſerved. It is ſufficient for me in this place to take notice, that this was one of thoſe miracles which had its influence on the learned converts, becauſe it is related by Tertullian, and the very letter appealed to. When theſe learned men ſaw ſickneſs and frenzy cured, the dead raiſed, the oracles put to ſilence, the dæmons and evil ſpirits forced to confeſs themſelves no gods, by perſons who only made uſe of prayer and adjurations in the name of their crucified Saviour; how could they doubt of their Saviour's power on the like occaſions, as repreſented to them by the traditions of the church, and the writings of the evangeliſts?

IV. Under this head, I cannot omit that which appears to me a ſtanding miracle in the three firſt centuries I mean that amazing and ſupernatural courage or patience, which was ſhewn by innumerble multitudes of martyrs, in thoſe ſlow and painful torments that were inflicted on them. I cannot conceive a man placed in the burning iron chair at Lyons, amid the inſults and mockeries of a crowded amphitheatre, and ſtill keeping his ſeat; or ſtretched upon a grate of iron, over coals of fire, and breathing out his ſoul among the exquiſite ſufferings of ſuch a tedious execution, rather than renounce his religion, or blaſpheme his Saviour. Such trials ſeem to me above the ſtrength of human nature, and able to overbear duty, reaſon, faith, conviction, nay and the moſt abſolute certainty of a future ſtate. Humanity, unaſſiſted in an extraordinary manner, muſt have ſhaken off the preſent preſſure, and have delivered itſelf out of ſuch a dreadful diſtreſs, by any means that could have been ſuggeſted to it. We can eaſily imagine, that many perſons, in ſo good a cauſe, might have laid down their lives at the gibbet, the ſtake, or the block: but to expire leiſurely among the moſt exquiſite tortures, when they might come out of them, even by a mental reſervation, or an hypocriſy which was not without a poſſibility of being followed by repentance and forgiveneſs, has

omething in it, ſo far beyond the force and natural ſtrength of mortals, that one cannot but think there was ſome miraculous power to ſupport the ſufferer.

V. We find the church of Smyrna, in that admirable letter, which gives an account of the death of Polycarp their beloved biſhop, mentioning the cruel torments of other early martyrs for Chriſtianity, are of opinion, that our Saviour ſtood by them in a viſion, and perſonally converſed with them, to give them ſtrength and comfort during the bitterneſs of their long-continued agonies; and we have the ſtory of a young man, who, having ſuffered many tortures, eſcaped with life, and told his fellow chriſtians, that the pain of them had been rendered tolerable, by the preſence of an angel that ſtood by him, and wiped off the tears and ſweat, which ran down his face whilſt he lay under his ſufferings. We are aſſured at leaſt that the firſt martyr for Chriſtianity was encouraged in his laſt moments, by a viſion of that divine Perſon, for whom he ſuffered, and into whoſe preſence he was then haſtening.

VI. Let any man calmly lay his hand upon his heart, and after reading theſe terrible conflicts in which the ancient martyrs and confeſſors were engaged, when they paſſed through ſuch new inventions and varieties of pain, as tired their tormentors; and aſk himſelf, however zealous and ſincere he is in his religion, whether, under ſuch acute and lingering torturers, he could ſtill have held faſt his integrity, and have profeſſed his faith to the laſt, without a ſupernatural aſſiſtance of ſome kind or other. For my part, when I conſider that it was not an unaccountable obſtinacy in a ſingle man, or in any particular ſet of men, in ſome extraordinary juncture; but that there were multitudes of each ſex, of every age, of different countries and conditions, who, for near 300 years together made this glorious confeſſion of their faith, in the midſt of tortures, and in the hour of death: I muſt conclude, that they were either of another make than men are at preſent, or that they had ſuch miraculous ſupports as were peculiar to thoſe times of Chriſti-

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amity, when without them perhaps the very name of it might have beeen extinguiſhed.

VII. It is certain, that the deaths and ſufferings of the primitive Chriſtians had a great ſhare in the converſion of thoſe learned Pagans, who lived in the ages of perſecution, which with ſome intervals and abatements, laſted near 300 years after our Saviour. Juſtin Martyr, Tertullian, Lactantius, Arnobius, and others, tell us, that this firſt of all alarmed their curioſity, rouſed their attention, and made them ſeriouſly inquiſitive into the nature of that religion, which could endue the mind with ſo much ſtrength, and overcome the fear of death, nay, raiſe an earneſt deſire of it, though it appeared in all its terrors. This they found had not been effectd by all the doctrines of thoſe philoſophers, whom they had thoroughly ſtudied, and who had been labouring at this great point. The ſight of theſe dying and tormented martyrs engaged them to ſearch into the hiſtory and doctrines of him for whom they ſuffered. The more they ſearched, the more they were convinced; till their conviction grew ſo ſtrong, that they themſelves embraced the ſame truths, and either actually laid down their lives, or were always in a readineſs to do it, rather than depart from them.

SECTION VIII.

I. *The completion of our Saviour's prophecies confirmed Pagans in their belief of the Goſpel.*—II. *Origen's obſervation on that of his Diſciples being brought before kings and governors.*—III. *On their being proſecuted for their religion.*—IV. *On their preaching the Goſpel to all nations;*—V. *On the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and ruin of the Jewiſh œconomy.*—VI. *Theſe arguments ſtrengthened by what has happened ſince Origen's time.*

I. THE ſecond of thoſe extraordinary means, of great uſe to the learned and inquiſitive Pagans of the three firſt centuries, for evincing the truth of the hiſtory of our Saviour, was the completion of ſuch prophecies as are recorded of him in the Evangeliſts. They could not indeed form any arguments for what he foretold, and

was fulfilled during his life, becauſe both the prophecy and the completion were over before they were publiſhed by the evangeliſts; though, as Origen obſerves, what end could there be in forging ſome of theſe predictions, as that of St. Peter's denying his Maſter, and all his Diſciples forſaking him in the greateſt extremity, which reflects ſo much ſhame on the great Apoſtle, and on all his companions? Nothing but a ſtrict adherence to truth, and to matters of fact, could have prompted the Evangeliſts to relate a circumſtance ſo diſadvantageous to their own reputation; as that father has well obſerved.

II. But to purſue his reflections on this ſubject. There are predictions of our Saviour recorded by the Evangeliſts, which were not completed till after their deaths, and had no likelihood of being ſo, when they were pronounced by our bleſſed Saviour. Such was that wonderful notice he gave them, that 'they ſhould be 'brought before governors and kings for his ſake, for 'a teſtimony againſt them and the Gentiles,' Mat. x. 28. with the other like prophecies, by which he foretold that his Diſciples were to be perſecuted. 'Is there any 'other doctrine in the world,' ſays this father, 'whoſe 'followers are puniſhed? Can the enemies of Chriſt ſay, 'that he knew his opinions were falſe and impious, and 'that therefore he might well conjecture and foretel what 'would be the treatment of thoſe perſons who ſhould em-'brace them? Suppoſing his doctrines were really ſuch, 'why ſhould this be the conſequence? What likelihood 'that men ſhould be brought before kings and governors 'for opinions and tenets of any kind, when this never 'happened even to the Epicureans, who abſolutely denied 'a Providence; nor to the Peripatetics themſelves, who 'laughed at the prayers and ſacrifices which were made 'to the Divinity? Are there any but the Chriſtians, 'who, according to this prediction of our Saviour, being 'brought before kings and governors for his ſake, are 'preſſed to their lateſt gaſp of breath, by their reſpective 'judges, to renounce Chriſtianity, and to procure their 'liberty and reſt, by offering the ſame ſacrifices, and 'taking the ſame oaths that others did?' III.

III. Conſider the time when our Saviour pronounced theſe words, Matt. x. 32. 'Whoſoever ſhall confeſs 'me before men, him will I alſo confeſs before my Fa- 'ther which is in heaven: but whoſoever ſhall deny me 'before men, him will I alſo deny before my Father 'which is in heaven.' Had you heard him ſpeak after this manner, when as yet his Diſciples were under no ſuch trials, you would certainly have ſaid within your- ſelf, if theſe ſpeeches of Jeſus are true, and if, accord- ing to his prediction, governors and kings undertake to ruin and deſtroy thoſe who ſhall profeſs themſelves his Diſciples, we will believe, not only that he is a Prophet, but that he has received power from God ſufficient to preſerve and propagate his religion; and that he would never talk in ſuch a peremptory and diſcouraging man- ner, were he not aſſured that he was able to ſubdue the moſt powerful oppoſition that could be made againſt the faith and doctrine which he taught.

IV. Who is not ſtruck with admiration, when he re- preſents to himſelf our Saviour at that time, foretelling that his Goſpel ſhould be preached in all the world, for a witneſs unto all nations, or, as Origen (who rather quotes the ſenſe than the words) to ſerve for a conviction to kings and people, when at the ſame time he finds that his Goſpel has accordingly been preached to the Greeks and Barbarians, to the learned, and to the ignorant, and that there is no quality or condition of life able to exempt men from ſubmitting to the doctrine of Chriſt? 'As for us, ſays this great author, in another part of his book againſt Celſus, 'when we ſee every day thoſe events exactly ac- 'compliſhed which our Saviour foretold at ſo great a 'diſtance, that "his Goſpel is preached in all the world," Matt. xxiv. 14. 'that "his Diſciples go and teach all "nations," Matt. xxviii. 19. 'and that "thoſe who "have received his doctrine are brought, for his ſake, "before governors and before kings," Matt. x. 18. 'we are filled with admiration, and our faith in him is 'confirmed more and more. What clearer and ſtronger 'proofs can Celſus aſk for the truth of what he ſpoke?'

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V. Origen inſiſts likewiſe with great ſtrength on that wonderful prediction of our Saviour concerning the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, pronounced at a time, as he obſerves when there was no likelihood nor appearance of it. This has been taken notice of and inculcated by ſo many others, that I ſhall refer you to what this father has ſaid on the ſubject in the firſt book againſt Celſus; and as to the accompliſhment of this remarkable prophecy, ſhall only obſerve, that whoever reads the account given us by Joſephus, without knowing his character, and compares it with what our Saviour foretold, would think the hiſtorian had been a Chriſtian, and that he had nothing elſe in view but to adjuſt the event to the prediction.

VI. I cannot quit this head without taking notice that Origen would ſtill have triumphed more in the foregoing arguments, had he lived an age longer, to have ſeen the Roman emperors, and all their governors and provinces, ſubmitting themſelves to the Chriſtian religion, and glorying in its profeſſion, as ſo many kings and ſovereigns ſtill place their relation to Chriſt at the head of their titles.

How much greater confirmation of his faith would he have received, had he ſeen our Saviour's prophecy ſtand good in the deſtruction of the temple, and the diſſolution of the Jewiſh œconomy, when Jews and Pagans united all their endeavours under Julian the apoſtate, to baffle and falſify the prediction? The great preparations that were made for rebuilding the temple, with the hurricane, earthquake, and eruptions of fire, that deſtroyed the work, and terrified thoſe employed in the attempt from proceeding in it, are related by many hiſtorians of the ſame age, and the ſubſtance of the ſtory teſtified both by Pagan and Jewiſh writers, as Ammianus Marcellinus, and Zamath David. The learned Chryſoſtom, in a ſermon againſt the Jews, tells them this fact was then freſh in the memories even of their young men, that it happened but twenty years ago, and that it was atteſted by all the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, where they might ſtill

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ſee the marks of it in the rubbiſh of that work, from which the Jews deſiſted in ſo great a fright, and which even Julian had not the courage to carry on. This fact, which is in itſelf ſo miraculous, and ſo indiſputable, brought over many of the Jews to Chriſtianity, and ſhows us, that after our Saviour's prophecy againſt it, the temple could not be preſerved from the plough paſſing over it, by all the care of Titus, who would fain have prevented its deſtruction, and that, inſtead of being re-edified by Julian, all his endeavours towards it did but ſtill more literally accompliſh our Saviour's prediction, that 'not one ſtone ſhould be left upon another.'

The ancient Chriſtians were ſo entirely perſuaded of the force of our Saviour's prophecies, and of the puniſhment which the Jews had drawn upon themſelves and upon their children, for the treatment which the Meſſiah had received at their hands, that they did not doubt but they would always remain an abandoned and diſperſed people, an hiſſing and an aſtoniſhment among the nations, as they are to this day. In ſhort, that they had loſt their peculiarity of being God's people, which was now transferred to the body of Chriſtians, and which preſerved the church of Chriſt among all the conflicts, difficulties, and perſecutions, in which it was engaged, as it had preſerved the Jewiſh govenment and œconomy for ſo many ages, whilſt it had the ſame truth and vital principle in it, notwithſtanding it was ſo frequently in danger of being utterly aboliſhed and deſtroyed. Origen, in his fourth book againſt Celſus, mentioning their being caſt out of Jeruſalem, the place to which their worſhip was annexed, deprived of their temple and ſacrifice, their religious rites and ſolemnities, and ſcattered over the face of the earth, ventures to aſſure them with a face of confidence, that they would never be re-eſtabliſhed, ſince they had committed that horrid crime againſt the Saviour of the world. This was a bold aſſertion in the good man, who knew how this people had been ſo wonderfully re-eſtabliſhed in former times, when they were almoſt ſwallowed up, and in the moſt deſperate ſtate of deſolation, as in their

deliverance

deliverance out of the Babyloniſh captivity, and the oppreſſions of Antiochus Epiphanes. Nay, he knew that within leſs than a hundred years before his own time, the Jews had made ſuch a powerful effort for the re-eſtabliſhment under Barchocab, in the reign of Adrian, as ſhook the whole Roman empire. But he founded his opinion on a ſure word of prophecy, and on the puniſhment they had ſo juſtly incurred; and we find by a long experience of 1500 years, that he was not miſtaken, nay that his opinion gathers ſtrength daily, ſince the Jews are now at a greater diſtance from any probability of ſuch a re-eſtabliſhment, than they were when Origen wrote.

SECTION IX.

I. *The lives of primitive Chriſtians, another means of bringing learned Pagans into their religion.*—II. *The change and reformation of their manners.*—III. *This looked upon as ſupernatural by the learned Pagans;*—IV. *And ſtrengthened the accounts given of our Saviour's life and hiſtory.*—V. *The Jewiſh prophecies of our Saviour, an argument for the heathen's belief.*—VI. *Purſued.*—VII. *Purſued.*

I. THERE was one other means enjoyed by the learned Pagans of the three firſt centuries, for ſatisfying them in the truth of our Saviour's hiſtory, which I might have brought under one of the foregoing heads; but as it is ſo ſhining a particular, and does ſo much honour to our religion, I ſhall make a diſtinct article of it, and only conſider it with regard to the ſubject I am upon: I mean the lives and manners of thoſe holy men, who believed in Chriſt during the firſt ages of Chriſtianity. I ſhould be thought to advance a paradox, ſhould I affirm that there were more Chriſtians in the world during thoſe times of perſecution, than there are at preſent in theſe which we call the flouriſhing times of Chriſtianity. But this will be found an indiſputable truth, if we form our calculation upon the opinions which prevailed in thoſe days, that every one who lives in the habitual practice of any voluntary ſin,

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actually cuts himself off from the benefits and profession of Christianity, and whatever he may call himself, is in reality no Christian, nor ought to be esteemed as such.

II. In the times we are now surveying, the Christian religion showed its full force and efficacy on the minds of men, and by many examples demonstrated what great and generous souls it was capable of producing. It exalted and refined its profelytes to a very high degree of perfection, and set them far above the pleasures, and even the pains of this life. It strengthened the infirmity, and broke the fierceness of human nature. It lifted up the minds of the ignorant to the knowledge and worship of him that made them, and inspired the vicious with a rational devotion, a strict purity of heart, and an unbounded love to their fellow-creatures. In proportion as it spread through the world, it seemed to change mankind into another species of beings. No sooner was a convert initiated into it, but by an easy figure he became a new man, and both acted and looked upon himself as one regenerated and born a second time into another state of existence.

III. It is not my business to be more particular in the accounts of primitive Christianity, which have been exhibited so well by others, but rather to observe, that the Pagan converts, of whom I am now speaking, mention this great reformation of those who had been the greatest sinners, with that sudden and surprising change which it made in the lives of the most profligate, as having something in it supernatural, miraculous, and more than human. Origen represents this power in the Christian religion, as no less wonderful than that of curing the lame and blind, or cleansing the leper. Many others represent it in the same light, and looked upon it as an argument that there was a certain divinity in that religion, which showed itself in such strange and glorious effects.

IV. This therefore was a great means not only of recommending Christianity to honest and learned heathens, but of confirming them in the belief of our Saviour's

history,

hiſtory, when they ſaw multitudes of virtuous men daily forming themſelves upon his example, animated by his precepts, and actuated by that ſpirit which he had promiſed to ſend among his diſciples.

V. But I find no argument made a ſtronger impreſſion on the minds of theſe eminent Pagan converts, for ſtrengthening their faith in the hiſtory of our Saviour, than the predictions relating to him, in thoſe old prophetic writings, which were depoſited among the hands of the greateſt enemies to chriſtianity, and owned by them to have been extant many ages before his appearance. The learned heathen converts, were aſtoniſhed to ſee the whole hiſtory of their Saviour's life, publiſhed before he was born, and to find that the evangeliſts and prophets, in their accounts of the Meſſiah, differed only in point of time, the one foretelling what ſhould happen to him, and the other deſcribing thoſe very particulars as what had actually happened. This our Saviour himſelf was pleaſed to make uſe of as the ſtrongeſt argument of his being the promiſed Meſſiah, and without it would hardly have reconciled his diſciples to the ignominy of his death, as in that remarkable paſſage which mentions his converſation with the two diſciples, on the day of his reſurrection. St. Luke xxiv. 13, to the end.

VI. The heathen converts, after having travelled through all human learning, and fortified their minds with the knowledge of arts and ſciences, were particularly qualified to examine theſe prophecies with great care and impartiality, and without prejudice or prepoſſeſſion. If the Jews, on the one ſide, put an unnatural interpretation on theſe prophecies, to evade the force of them in their controverſies with the chriſtians; or if the chriſtians, on the other ſide, overſtrained ſeveral paſſages in their applications of them, as it often happens among men of the beſt underſtanding, when their minds are heated with any conſideration, that bears a more than ordinary weight with it: the learned heathens may be looked upon as neuters in the matter, when all theſe

prophecies

prophecies were new to them, and their education had left the interpretation of them free and indifferent. Beſides, theſe learned men among the primitive chriſtians, knew how the Jews, who had preceded our Saviour, interpreted theſe predictions, and the ſeveral marks by which they acknowledged the Meſſiah, would be diſcovered, and how thoſe of the Jewiſh doctors, who ſucceeded him, had deviated from the interpretations and doctrines of their forefathers, on purpoſe to ſtifle their own conviction.

VII. This ſet of arguments had therefore an invincible force with thoſe Pagan philoſophers who became chriſtians, as we find in moſt of their writings. They could not diſbelieve our Saviour's hiſtory, which ſo exactly agreed with every thing that had been written of him, many ages before his birth, nor doubt of thoſe circumſtances being fulfilled in him, which could not be true of any perſon that lived in the world beſides himſelf. This wrought the greateſt confuſion in the unbelieving Jews, and the greateſt conviction in the Gentiles, who every where ſpeak with aſtoniſhment of theſe truths, they meet with in this new magazine of learning, which was opened to them, and carry the point ſo far as to think whatever excellent doctrine they had met with among Pagan writers, had been ſtole from their converſation with the Jews, or from the peruſal of theſe writings which they had in their cuſtody.

ADDITIONAL DISCOURSES.

SECTION I.

Of God, and his Attributes.

Qui mare & terras variiſque mundum
Temperat horis:
Unde nil majus g neratur ipſo
Nec viget quicquam ſimile aut ſecundum. HOR.

SIMONIDES being aſked by Dionyſius the tyrant, what God was, deſired a day's time to conſider of it, before he made his reply. When the day was expired, he deſired two days; and afterwards, inſtead of returning his anſwer, demanded ſtill double the time to

conſider of it. This great poet and philoſopher, the more he contemplated the nature of the deity, found that he waded but the more out of his depth; and that he loſt himſelf in the thought, inſtead of finding an end of it.

If we conſider the idea which wiſe men, by the light of reaſon, have framed of the Divine Being, it amounts to this: that he has in him all the perfection of a ſpiritual nature; and ſince we have no notion of any kind of ſpiritual perfection but what we diſcover in our own ſouls, we join infinitude to each kind of theſe perfections, and what is a faculty in an human ſoul, becomes an attribute in God. We exiſt in place and time, the Divine Being fills the immenſity of ſpace with his preſence, and inhabits eternity. We are poſſeſſed of a little power, and a little knowledge, the Divine Being is almighty and omniſcient. In ſhort, by adding infinity to any kind of perfection we enjoy, and by joining all theſe different kinds of perfections in one Being, we form our idea of the great ſovereign of nature.

Though every one who thinks, muſt have made this obſervation, I ſhall produce Mr. Locke's authority to the ſame purpoſe, out of his eſſay on Human Underſtanding. 'If we examine the idea we have of the incomprehenſible Supreme Being, we ſhall find, that we come by it the ſame way; and that the complex ideas we have, both of God and ſeparate ſpirits, are made up of the ſimple ideas we receive from reflexion: v. g. having from what we experience in ourſelves, got the ideas of exiſtence and duration, of knowledge and power, of pleaſure and happineſs, and of ſeveral other qualities and powers, which it is better to have, than to be without; when we would frame an idea, the moſt ſuitable we can to the Supreme Being, we enlarge every one of theſe with our idea of infinity; and ſo putting them together, make our complex idea of God.'

It is not impoſſible that there may be many kinds of ſpiritual perfection, beſides thoſe which are lodged in an human

human ſoul; but it is impoſſible that we ſhould have ideas of any kinds of perfection, except thoſe of which we have ſome ſmall rays and ſhort imperfect ſtrokes in ourſelves. It would be therefore, a very high preſumption to determine, whether the Supreme Being has not more attributes, than thoſe which enter into our conceptions of him. This is certain, that if there be any kind of ſpiritual perfection, which is not marked out in an human ſoul, it belongs in its fulneſs to the divine nature.

Several eminent philoſophers have imagined that the ſoul, in her ſeparate ſtate, may have new faculties ſpringing up in her, which ſhe is not capable of exerting during her preſent union with the body; and whether theſe faculties may not correſpond with other attributes in the divine nature, and open to us hereafter, new matter of wonder and adoration, we are altogether ignorant. This, as I have ſaid before, we ought to acquieſce in, that the Sovereign Being, the great author of nature, has in him all poſſible perfection, as well in kind as in degree; to ſpeak according to our methods of conceiving. I ſhall only add under this head, that when we have raiſed our notion of this infinite Being, as high as it is poſſible for the mind of man to go, it will fall infinitely ſhort of what he really is. 'There is no end of his greatneſs:' The moſt exalted creature he has made, is only capable of adoring it; none but himſelf can comprehend it.

The advice of the ſon of Sirach is very juſt and ſublime in this light. 'By his word all things conſiſt. 'We may ſpeak much, and yet come ſhort: wherefore 'in ſum, he is all. How ſhall we be able to magnify 'him? For he is great above all his works. The Lord 'is terrible and very great; and marvellous is his power. 'When you glorify the Lord, exalt him as much as you 'can; for even yet will he far exceed. And when you 'exalt him, put forth all your ſtrength, and be not 'weary; for you can never go far enough. Who hath 'ſeen him, that he might tell us? And who can mag-'nify him as he is? There are yet hid, greater things

'than these be, for we have seen but a few of his 'works.'

I have here only considered the Supreme Being by the light of reason and philosophy. If we would see him in all the wonders of his mercy, we must have recourse to revelation, which represents him to us, not only as infinitely great and glorious, but as infinitely good and just in his dispensations towards man. But as this is a theory which falls under every ones consideration, though indeed it can never be sufficiently considered, I shall here only take notice of that habitual worship and veneration which we ought to pay to this Almighty Being. We should often refresh our minds with the thought of him, and annihilate ourselves before him, in the contemplation of our own worthlessness, and of his transcendent excellency and perfection. This would imprint in our minds such a constant and uninterrupted awe and veneration as that which I am here recommending, and which is in reality, a kind of incessant prayer, and reasonable humiliation of the soul, before him who made it.

This would effectually kill in us, all the little seeds of pride, vanity, and self-conceit, which are apt to shoot up in the minds of such, whose thoughts turn more on those comparative advantages which they enjoy over some of their fellow creatures, than on that infinite distance, which is placed between them and the supreme model of all perfection. It would likewise quicken our desires and endeavours of uniting ourselves to him, by all the acts of religion and virtue.

Such an habitual homage to the Supreme Being would, in a particular manner, banish from among us, that prevailing impiety, of using his name on the most trivial occasions.

I find the following passage in an excellent sermon, preached at the funeral of a gentleman, who was an honour to his country, and a more diligent as well as successful enquirer into the works of nature, than any

other

other our nation has ever produced. 'He had the profoundeſt veneration for the great God of heaven and 'earth, that I have ever obſerved in any perſon. The 'very name of God was never mentioned by him, 'without a pauſe, and a viſible ſtop in his diſcourſe; 'in which, one that knew him moſt particularly above 'twenty years, has told me, that he was ſo exact, that 'he does not remember to have obſerved him once to 'fail in it.'

Every one knows the veneration which was paid by the Jews to a name ſo great, wonderful, and holy. They would not let it enter even into their religious diſcourſes. What can we then think of thoſe, who make uſe of ſo tremendous a name in the ordinary expreſſions of their anger, mirth, and moſt impertinent paſſions? Of thoſe who admit it into the moſt familiar queſtions and aſſertions, ludicrous phraſes, and works of humour? not to mention thoſe who violate it by ſolemn perjuries? It would be an affront to reaſon to endeavour to ſet forth the horror and profaneneſs of ſuch a practice. The very mention of it expoſes it ſufficiently to thoſe in whom the light of nature, not to ſay religion, is not utterly extinguiſhed. O.

---------- Deum namque ire per omnes
Terraſque, tractuſque maris, cœlumque profundum. VIRG.

I WAS yeſterday, about ſun-ſet, walking in the open fields, till the night inſenſibly fell upon me. I at firſt amuſed myſelf with all the richneſs and variety of colours which appeared in the weſtern parts of heaven: in proportion as they faded and went out, ſeveral ſtars and planets appeared, one after another, till the whole firmament was in a glow. The blueneſs of the ether was exceedingly heightened and enlivened by the ſeaſon of the year, and by the rays of all thoſe luminaries that paſſed through it. The galaxy appeared in its moſt beautiful white. To complete the ſcene, the full-moon roſe at length in that clouded majeſty, which Milton takes notice of, and opened to the eye a new picture of

nature, which was more finely ſhaded, and diſpoſed among ſofter lights, than that which the ſun had before diſcovered to us.

As I was ſurveying the moon walking in her brightneſs, and taking her progreſs among the conſtellations, a thought aroſe in me, which I believe, very often perplexes and diſturbs men of ſerious and contemplative natures. David himſelf fell into it in that reflexion. 'When I conſider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, 'the moon and the ſtars which thou haſt ordained; what 'is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the ſon of 'man, that thou regardeſt him!' In the ſame manner, when I conſidered that infinite hoſt of ſtars, or, to ſpeak more philoſophically, of ſuns, which were then ſhining upon me, with thoſe innumerable ſets of planets, or worlds, which were moving round their reſpective ſuns; when I ſtill enlarged the idea, and ſuppoſed another heaven of ſuns and worlds riſing ſtill above this which we diſcovered, and theſe ſtill enlightened by a ſuperior firmament of luminaries, which are planted at ſo great a diſtance, that they may appear to the inhabitants of the former as the ſtars do to us; in ſhort, whilſt I purſued this thought, I could not but reflect on that little inſignificant figure which I myſelf bore amidſt the immenſity of God's works.

Were the ſun, which enlightens this part of the creation, with all the hoſt of planetary worlds, that move about him, utterly extinguiſhed and annihilated; they would not be miſſed more than a grain of ſand upon the ſea ſhore. The ſpace they poſſeſs is ſo exceedingly little, in compariſon of the whole, that it would ſcarce make a blank in the creation. The chaſm would be imperceptible to an eye, that could take in the whole compaſs of nature, and paſs from one end of the creation to the other; as it is poſſible there may be ſuch a ſenſe in ourſelves hereafter, or in creatures which are at preſent more exalted than ourſelves. We ſee many ſtars by the help of glaſſes, which we do not diſcover with our naked

eyes:

eyes; and the finer our teleſcopes are, the more ſtill are our diſcoveries. Huygenius carries this thought ſo far, that he does not think it impoſſible there may be ſtars whoſe light is not yet travelled down to us, ſince their firſt creation. There is no queſtion but the univerſe has certain bounds ſet to it; but when we conſider that it was the work of infinite power, prompted by infinite goodneſs, with an infinite ſpace to exert itſelf in, how can our imagination ſet any bounds to it?

To return therefore to my firſt thought, I could not but look upon myſelf with ſecret horror, as a being, that was not worth the ſmalleſt regard of one who had ſo great a work under his care and ſuperintendency. I was afraid of being overlooked amidſt the immenſity of nature, and loſt among that infinite variety of creatures, which in all probability ſwarm through all theſe immeaſurable regions of matter.

In order to recover myſelf from this mortifying thought, I conſidered that it took its riſe from thoſe narrow conceptions, which we are apt to entertain of the divine nature. We ourſelves cannot attend to many different objects at the ſame time. If we are careful to inſpect ſome things, we muſt of courſe neglect others. This imperfection, which we obſerve in ourſelves, is an imperfection that cleaves in ſome degree to creatures of the higheſt capacities, as they are creatures, that is, beings of finite and limited natures. The preſence of every created being, is confined to a certain meaſure of ſpace, and conſequently his obſervation is ſtinted to a certain number of objects. The ſphere in which we move, and act, and underſtand, is of a wider circumference to one creature than another, according as we riſe one above another, in the ſcale of exiſtence. But the wideſt of theſe our ſpheres, has its circumference. When therefore we reflect on the divine nature, we are ſo uſed and accuſtomed to this imperfection in ourſelves, that we cannot forbear in ſome meaſure aſcribing it to him, in whom there is no ſhadow of imperfection. Our

reaſon

reaſon indeed aſſures us, that his attributes are infinite, but the poorneſs of our conceptions is ſuch, that it cannot forbear ſetting bounds to every thing it contemplates, till our reaſon comes again to our ſuccour, and throws down all thoſe little prejudices which riſe in us unawares, and are natural to the mind of man.

We ſhall therefore utterly extinguiſh this melancholy thought, of our being overlooked by our Maker, in the multiplicity of his works, and the infinity of thoſe objects, among which he ſeems to be inceſſantly employed, if we conſider, in the firſt place, that he is omnipreſent; and, in the ſecond, that he is omniſcient.

If we conſider him in his Omnipreſence: his being paſſes through, actuates, and ſupports the whole frame of nature. His creation, and every part of it, is full of him. There is nothing he has made, that is either ſo diſtant, ſo little, or ſo inconſiderable, which he does not eſſentially inhabit. His ſubſtance is within the ſubſtance of every being, whether material or immaterial, and as intimately preſent to it, as that being is to itſelf. It would be an imperfection in him, were he able to remove out of one place into another, or to withdraw himſelf from any thing he has created, or from any part of that ſpace which is diffuſed and ſpread abroad to infinity. In ſhort, to ſpeak of him in the language of the old philoſopher, he is a being whoſe centre is every where, and his circumference no where.

In the ſecond place, he is omniſcient as well as omnipreſent. His omniſcience, indeed, neceſſarily and naturally flows from his omnipreſence; he cannot but be conſcious of every motion that ariſes in the whole material world, which he thus eſſentially pervades, and of every thought that is ſtirring in the intellectual world, to every part of which he is thus intimately united. Several moraliſts have conſidered the creation as the temple of God, which he has built with his own hands, and which is filled with his preſence. Others have conſidered infinite ſpace as the receptacle, or rather the habitation of the Almighty: but the nobleſt and moſt exalted

alted way of conſidering this infinite ſpace, is that of Sir Iſaac Newton, who calls it the Senſorium of the Godhead. Brutes and men, have their Senſoriola, or little Senſoriums, by which they apprehend the preſence, and perceive the actions of a few objects, that lie contiguous to them. Their knowledge and obſervation, turns within a very narrow circle. But as God Almighty cannot but perceive and know every thing in which he reſides, infinite ſpace gives room to infinite knowledge, and is, as it were, an organ to omniſcience.

Were the ſoul ſeparate from the body, and with one glance of thought, ſhould ſtart beyond the bounds of the creation, ſhould it for millions of years continue its progreſs through infinite ſpace with the ſame activity, it would ſtill find itſelf within the embrace of its Creator, and encompaſſed round with the immenſity of the Godhead. Whilſt we are in the body, he is not leſs preſent with us, becauſe he is concealed from us. 'O 'that I knew where I might find him! ſays Job. 'Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, 'but I cannot perceive him. On the left hand where 'he does work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth 'himſelf on the right hand, that I cannot ſee him.' In ſhort, reaſon as well as revelation aſſures us, that he cannot be abſent from us, notwithſtanding he is undiſcovered by us.

In this conſideration of God Almighty's omnipreſence and omniſcience every uncomfortable thought vaniſhes. He cannot but regard every thing that has being, eſpecially ſuch of his creatures who fear they are not regarded by him. He is privy to all their thoughts, and to that anxiety of heart in particular, which is apt to trouble them on this occaſion: for, as it is impoſſible he ſhould overlook any of his creatures, ſo we may be confident that he regards, with an eye of mercy, thoſe who endeavour to recommend themſelves to his notice, and in an unfeigned humility of heart, think themſelves unworthy that he ſhould be mindful of them.

Cœlum

——————Cœlum quid quærimus ultra? Luc.

IN your paper of Friday the 9th inſtant you had occaſion to conſider the Ubiquity of the Godhead, and at the ſame time to ſhew, that as he is preſent to every thing, he cannot but be attentive to every thing, and privy to all the modes and parts of its exiſtence; or, in other words, that his Omniſcience and Omnipreſence are coexiſtent, and run together through the whole infinitude of ſpace. This conſideration might furniſh us with many incentives to devotion and motives to morality, but as this ſubject has been handled by ſeveral excellent writers, I ſhall conſider it in a light wherein I have not ſeen it placed by others.

Firſt, How diſconſolate is the condition of an intellectual Being who is thus preſent with his Maker, but at the ſame time receives no extraordinary benefit or advantage from this his preſence!

Secondly, How deplorable is the condition of an intellectual Being, who feels no other effects from this his preſence but ſuch as proceed from divine wrath and indignation!

Thirdly, How happy is the condition of that intellectual Being, who is ſenſible of his Maker's preſence, from the ſecret effects of his mercy and loving-kindneſs!

Firſt, How diſconſolate is the condition of an intellectual Being, who is thus preſent with his Maker, but at the ſame time receives no extraordinary benefit or advantage from this his preſence! Every particle of matter is actuated by this Almighty Being which paſſes through it. The heavens and the earth, the ſtars and planets move and gravitate by virtue of this great principle within them. All the dead parts of nature are invigorated by the preſence of their Creator, and made capable of exerting their reſpective qualities. The ſeveral inſtincts, in the brute creation, do likewiſe operate and work towards the ſeveral ends which are agreeable to them, by this divine energy. Man only, who does not co-operate with this holy Spirit, and is inattentive to his preſence, receives none of thoſe advantages from it, which are perfective

fective of his nature, and neceſſary to his well-being.—The divinity is with him, and in him, and every where about him, but of no advantage to him. It is the ſame thing to a man without relig on, as if there was no God in the world. It is indeed impoſſible for an infinite Being to remove himſelf from any of his creatures; but though he cannot withdraw his eſſence from us, which would argue an imperfection in him, he can withdraw from us all the joys and conſolations of it. His preſence may perhaps be neceſſary to ſupport us in our exiſtence; but he may leave this our exiſtence to itſelf, with regard to its happineſs or miſery. For, in this ſenſe, he may caſt us away from his preſence, and take his holy Spirit from us. This ſingle conſideration one would think ſufficient to make us open our hearts to all thoſe infuſions of joy and gladneſs which are ſo near at hand, and ready to be poured in upon us; eſpecially when we conſider, Secondly, The deplorable condition of an intellectual Being, who feels no other effects from his Maker's preſence, but ſuch as proceed from divine wrath and indignation!

We may aſſure ourſelves that the great Author of nature will not always be as one, who is indifferent to any of his creatures. Thoſe who will not feel him in his love, will be ſure at length to feel him in his diſpleaſure. And how dreadful is the condition of that creature, who is only ſenſible of the Being of his Creator by what he ſuffers from him! He is as eſſentially preſent in hell as in heaven, but the inhabitants of thoſe accurſed places behold him only in his wrath, and ſhrink within the flames to conceal themſelves from him. It is not in the power of imagination to conceive the fearful effects of Omnipotence incenſed.

But I ſhall only conſider the wretchedneſs of an intellectual Being, who, in this life, lies under the d.ſpleaſure of him, that at all times and at all places is intimately uni ed with him. He is able to diſquiet the ſoul, and vex it in all its faculties. He can hinder any of the greateſt comforts of life from refreſhing us, and give an edge to every one of its ſlighteſt calamities. Who then can

bear

bear the thought of being an outcaſt from his preſence, that is, from the comforts of it, or of feeling it only in its terrors? How pathetic is that expoſtulation of Job, when, for the trial of his patience, he was made to look upon himſelf in this deplorable condition! 'Why haſt 'thou ſet me as a mark againſt thee, ſo that I am become 'a burden to myſelf?' But, Thirdly, How happy is the condition of that intellectual Being, who is ſenſible of his Maker's preſence, from the ſecret effects of his mercy and loving kindneſs.

The bleſſed in heaven behold him face to face; that is, are as ſenſible of his preſence as we are of the preſence of any perſon whom we look upon with our eyes. There is doubtleſs a faculty in ſpirits, by which they apprehend one another, as our ſenſes do material objects; and there is no queſtion but our ſouls, when they are diſembodied, or placed in glorified bodies, will by this faculty, in whatever part of ſpace they reſide, be always ſenſible of the divine preſence. We, who have this veil of fleſh ſtanding between us and the world of ſpirits, muſt be content to know that the ſpirit of God is preſent with us, by the effects which he produceth in us. Our outward ſenſes are too groſs to apprehend him; we may, however, taſte and ſee how gracious he is, by his influence upon our minds, by thoſe virtuous thoughts which he awakens in us, by thoſe ſecret comforts and refreſhments which he conveys into our ſouls, and by thoſe raviſhing joys and inward ſatisfactions, which are perpetually ſpringing up and diffuſing themſelves among all the thoughts of good men. He is lodged in our very eſſence, and is as a ſoul within the ſoul, to irradiate its underſtanding, rectify its will, purify its paſſions, and enliven all the powers of man. How happy therefore is an intellectual Being, who, by prayer and meditation, by virtue and good works, opens this communication between God and his own ſoul! Though the whole creation frowns upon him, and all nature looks black about him, he has his light and ſupport within him, that are able to cheer his mind, and bear him up in the midſt

midſt of all theſe horrors which encompaſs him. He knows that his helper is at hand, and is always nearer to him than any thing elſe can be, which is capable of annoying or terrifying him. In the midſt of calumny or contempt, he attends to that Being who whiſpers better things within his ſoul, and whom he looks upon as his defender, his glory, and the lifter up of his head. In his deepeſt ſolitude and retirement, he knows that he is in company with the greateſt of Beings; and perceives within himſelf ſuch real ſenſations of his preſence, as are more delightful than any thing that can be met with in the converſation of his creatures. Even in the hour of death, he conſiders the pains of his diſſolution to be nothing elſe but the breaking down of that partition, which ſtands betwixt his ſoul, and the ſight of that being, who is always preſent with him, and is about to manifeſt itſelf to him in fulneſs of joy.

If we would be thus happy, and thus ſenſible of our Maker's preſence, from the ſecret effects of his mercy and goodneſs, we muſt keep ſuch a watch over all our thoughts, that, in the language of the Scripture, his ſoul may have pleaſure in us. We muſt take care not to grieve his holy ſpirit, and endeavour to make the meditations of our hearts always acceptable in his ſight, that he may delight thus to reſide and dwell in us. The light of nature could direct Seneca to this doctrine, in a very remarkable paſſage among his epiſtles, 'Sacer ineſt in no-'bis ſpiritus bonorum, malorumque cuſtos, & obſerva-'tor, & quemadmodum nos illum tractamus, ita & ille 'nos.' There is a holy ſpirit reſiding in us who watches and obſerves both good and evil men, and will treat us after the ſame manner that we treat him. But I ſhall conclude this diſcourſe with theſe more empatical words in divine revelation, 'If a man love me, he will keep my 'word, and my father will love him, and we will come 'unto him, and make our abode with him.'

——Si verbo audacia detur,
Non metuam magni dixisse palatia Cœli. Ov. Met.

SIR,

I Considered in my two last letters that awful and tremendous subject, the Ubiquity or Omnipresence of the Divine Being. I have shewn that he is equally present in all places throughout the whole extent of infinite space. This doctrine is so agreeable to reason, that we meet with it in the writings of the enlightened Heathens, as I might shew at large, were it not already done by other hands. But though the Deity be thus essentially present through all the immensity of space, there is one part of it in which he discovers himself in a most transcendent and visible glory. This is that place which is marked out in Scripture, under the different appellations of "paradise, the third heaven, the throne of God, and the habitation of his glory." It is here where the glorified Body of our Saviour resides, and where all the celestial hierarchies, and the innumerable hosts of angels, are represented as perpetually surrounding the seat of God with hallelujahs and hymns of praise. This is that presence of God which some of the divines call his glorious, and others his majestic presence. He is indeed as essentially present in all other places as in this, but it is here where he resides in a sensible magnificence, and in the midst of those splendours which can affect the imagination of created beings.

It is very remarkable that this opinion of God Almighty's presence in heaven, whether discovered by the light of nature, or by a general tradition from our first parents, prevails among all the nations of the world, whatsoever different notions they entertain of the Godhead. If you look into Homer, that is, the most ancient of the Greek writers, you see the Supreme powers seated in the heavens, and encompassed with inferior Deities, among whom the Muses are represented as singing incessantly about his throne. Who does not here see the main strokes and outlines of this great truth

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'we are ſpeaking of? The ſame doctrine is ſhadowed 'out in many other Heathen authors, though at the ſame 'time, like ſeveral other revealed truths, daſhed and adul- 'terated with a mixture of fables and human inventions. 'But to paſs over the notions of the Greeks and Romans, 'thoſe more enlightened parts of the Pagan world, we 'find there is ſcarce a people among the late-diſcovered 'nations who are not trained up in an opinion, that 'heaven is the habitation of the divinity whom they 'worſhip.

'As in Solomon's temple there was the Sanctum Sanc- 'torum, in which a viſible glory appeared among the 'the figures of the cherubims, and into which none but 'the high-prieſt himſelf was permitted to enter, after 'having made an atonement for the ſins of the people; 'ſo, if we conſider the whole creation as one great tem- 'ple, there is in it this Holy of Holies, into which the 'High-prieſt of our ſalvation entered, and took his place 'among angels and archangels, after having made a 'propitiation for the ſins of mankind.

'With how much ſkill muſt the throne of God be 'erected? With what glorious deſigns is that habitation 'beautified, which is contrived and built by him who 'inſpired Hiram with wiſdom? How great muſt be the 'majeſty of that place, where the whole art of creation 'has been employed, and where God has choſen to ſhew 'himſelf in the moſt magnificent manner? What muſt be 'the architecture of infinite power under the direction of 'infinite wiſdom? A ſpirit cannot but be tranſported af- 'ter an ineffable manner, with the ſight of thoſe objects, 'which were made to affect him by that Being who 'knows the inward frame of a ſoul, and how to pleaſe 'and raviſh it in all its moſt ſecret powers, and facul- 'ties. It is to this majeſtic preſence of God we may ap- 'ply thoſe beautiful expreſſions in Holy Writ: "Be- "hold even to the moon, and it ſhineth not? yea, the "ſtars are not pure in his ſight." The light of the ſun, 'and all the glories of the world in which we live, are 'but as weak and ſickly glimmerings, or rather dark-

'neſs itſelf, in compariſon of thoſe ſplendours which encompaſs the throne of God.

'As the glory of this place is tranſcendent beyond imagination, ſo probably is the extent of it. There is 'light behind light, and glory within glory. How far 'that ſpace may reach, in which God thus appears in 'perfect majeſty, we cannot poſſibly conceive. Though 'it is not infinite, it may be indefinite; and though not 'immeaſurable in itſelf, it may be ſo with regard to any 'created eye or imagination. If he has made theſe lower 'regions of matter ſo inconceivably wide and magnificent for the habitation of mortal and periſhable Beings, 'how great may we ſuppoſe the courts of his houſe to 'be, where he makes his reſidence in a more eſpecial manner, and diſplays himſelf in the fulneſs of his glory, 'among an innumerable company of angels, and ſpirits 'of juſt men made perfect?

'This is certain, that our imaginations cannot be raiſed 'too high, when we think of a place where omnipotence 'and omniſcience have ſo ſignally exerted themſelves, be'cauſe they are able to produce a ſcene infinitely more 'great and glorious than what we are able to imagine. 'It is not impoſſible but, at the conſummation of all 'things, theſe outward apartments of nature, which are 'now ſuited to thoſe beings who inhabit them, may be 'taken in and added to that glorious place of which I 'am here ſpeaking, and by that means made a proper 'habitation for beings who were exempt from mortality, 'and cleared of their imperfections: for ſo the Scripture 'ſeems to intimate, when it ſpeaks of new heavens and of 'a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs.

'I have only conſidered this glorious place, with re'gard to the ſight and imagination, though it is highly 'probable that our other ſenſes may here likewiſe enjoy 'their higheſt gratifications. There is nothing which 'more raviſhes and tranſports the ſoul, than harmony; 'and we have great reaſon to believe, from the deſcriptions of this place in Holy Scripture, that this is one of 'the entertainments of it. And if the ſoul of man can

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'be ſo wonderfully affected with thoſe ſtrains of muſic, 'which human art is capable of producing, how much 'more will it be raiſed and elevated by thoſe, in which 'is exerted the whole power of harmony! The ſenſes are 'faculties of the human ſoul, though they cannot be em-'ployed, during this our vital union, without proper in-'ſtruments in the body. Why, therefore, ſhould we ex-'clude the ſatisfaction of theſe faculties, which we find 'by experience are inlets of great pleaſure to the ſoul, 'from among thoſe entertainments which are to make 'up our happineſs hereafter? Why ſhould we ſuppoſe 'that our hearing and ſeeing will not be gratified with 'thoſe objects which are moſt agreeable to them, and 'which they cannot meet with in theſe lower regions of 'nature; objects, "which neither eye hath ſeen nor "ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man "to conceive? I knew a man in Chriſt (ſays St. Paul, "ſpeaking of himſelf) above fourteen years ago (whe-"ther in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the "body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) ſuch a one caught "up to the third heaven. And I knew ſuch a man, "(whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot "tell: God knoweth) how that he was caught up into "paradiſe, and heard unſpeakable words, which it is not "poſſible for a man to utter." 'By this is meant, that 'what he had heard was ſo infinitely different from any 'thing which he had heard in this world, that it was 'impoſſible to expreſs it in ſuch words as might convey 'a notion of it to his hearers.

'It is very natural for us to take delight in enquiries 'concerning any foreign country, where we are ſome time 'or other to make our abode; and as we all hope to be 'admitted into this glorious place, it is both a laudable 'and uſeful curioſity, to get what information we can of 'it, whilſt we make uſe of revelation for our guide. When 'theſe everlaſting doors ſhall be open to us, we may be 'ſure that the pleaſures and beauties of this place will 'infinitely tranſcend our preſent hopes and expectations, 'and that the glorious appearance of the throne of God

'will riſe infinitely beyond whatever we are able to conceive of it. We might here entertain ourſelves with many other ſpeculations on this ſubject from thoſe ſeveral hints which we find of it in the Holy Scriptures; as, whether there may not be different manſions, and apartments of glory, to beings of different natures; whether as they excel one another in perfection, they are not admitted nearer to the throne of the Almighty, and enjoy greater manifeſtations of his preſence; whether there are not ſolemn times and occaſions, when all the multitude of heaven celebrate the preſence of their Maker in more extraordinary forms of praiſe and adoration; as Adam, though he had continued in a ſtate of innocence, would, in the opinion of our divines, have kept holy the Sabbath-day, in a more particular manner than any other of the ſeven. Theſe, and the like ſpeculations, we may very innocently indulge, ſo long as we make uſe of them, to inſpire us with a deſire of becoming inhabitants of this delightful place.

'I have in this, and in two foregoing letters, treated on the moſt ſerious ſubject that can employ the mind of man, the Omnipreſcence of the Deity; a ſubject which, if poſſible, ſhould never depart from our meditations. We have conſidered the divine Being, as he inhabits infinitude, as he dwells among his works, as he is preſent to the mind of man, and as he diſcovers himſelf in a more glorious manner among the regions of the bleſt. Such a conſideration ſhould be kept awake in us at all times, and in all places, and poſſeſs our minds with a perpetual awe and reverence; it ſhould be interwoven with all our thoughts and perceptions, and become one with the conſciouſneſs of our own Being. It is not to be reflected on in the coldneſs of philoſophy, but ought to ſink us into the loweſt proſtration before him, who is ſo aſtoniſhingly great, wonderful, and holy!'

Aſſiduo

——————Aſſiduo labuntur tempora motu
Non ſecus ac flumen. Neque enim conſiſtere flumen,
Nec levis hora poteſt: ſed ut unda impellitur unda,
Urgeturque prior venienti, urgetque priorem,
Tempora ſic fugiunt pariter, pariterque ſecuuntur;
Et nova ſunt ſemper. Nam quod fuit ante, relictum eſt;
Fitque quod haud fuerat: momentaque cuncta novantur. Ovid Met.

WE conſider infinite ſpace as an expanſion without a circumference: We conſider eternity, or infinite duration, as a line that has neither a beginning nor end. In our ſpeculations of infinite ſpace, we conſider that particular place in which we exiſt, as a kind of center to the whole expanſion. In our ſpeculations of eternity we conſider the time which is preſent to us as the middle, which divides the whole line into two equal parts. For this reaſon, many witty authors compare the preſent time to an iſthmus, or narrow neck of land, that riſes in the midſt of an ocean, immeaſurably diffuſed on either ſide of it.

Philoſophy, and indeed common ſenſe, naturally throws eternity under two diviſions; which we may call in Engliſh, that eternity which is paſt, and that eternity which is to come. The learned terms of *æternitas à parte ante*, and *æternitas à parte poſt*, may be more amuſing to the reader, but can have no other idea affixed to them than what is conveyed to us by thoſe words, an eternity that is paſt, and an eternity that is to come. Each of theſe eternities is bounded at the one extreme; or, in other words, the former has an end, and the latter a beginning.

Let us firſt of all conſider that eternity which is paſt, reſerving that which is to come for the ſubject of another paper. The nature of this eternity is utterly inconceivable by the mind of man: our reaſon demonſtrates to us that it has been, but at the ſame time can frame no idea of it, but what is big with abſurdity and contradiction. We can have no other conception of any duration which is paſt, than that all of it was once preſent; and whatever was once preſent, is at ſome certain diſtance from us, and whatſoever is at any certain diſtance from us, be the diſtance never ſo remote, cannot be eternity. The very notion of any duration's being paſt, implies that it

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was once preſent; for the idea of being once preſent, is actually included in the idea of its being paſt. This, therefore, is a depth not to be ſounded by human underſtanding. We are ſure that there has been an eternity, and yet contradict ourſelves when we meaſure this eternity by any notion which we can frame of it.

If we go to the bottom of this matter, we ſhall find, that the difficulties we meet with in our conceptions of eternity proceed from this ſingle reaſon, that we can have no other idea of any kind of duration, than that by which we ourſelves, and all other created beings, do exiſt; which is, a ſucceſſive duration made up of paſt, preſent and to come. There is nothing which exiſts after this manner, all the parts of whoſe exiſtence were not once actually preſent, and conſequently may be reached by a certain number of years applied to it. We may aſcend as high as we pleaſe, and employ our being to that eternity which is to come, in adding millions of years, to millions of years, and we can never come up to any fountain-head of duration, to any beginning in eternity: but at the ſame time we are ſure, that whatever was once preſent does lie within the reach of numbers, though perhaps we can never be able to put enough of them together for that purpoſe. We may as well ſay, that any thing may be actually preſent in any part of infinite ſpace, which does not lie at a certain diſtance from us, as that any part of infinite duration was once actully preſent, and does not alſo lie at ſome determined diſtance from us. The diſtance in both caſes may be immeaſurable and indefinite, as to our faculties, but our reaſon tells us that it cannot be ſo in itſelf. Here therefore is that difficulty which human underſtanding is not capable of ſurmounting. We are ſure that ſomething muſt have exiſted from eternity, and are at the ſame time unable to conceive, that any thing which exiſts, according to our notion of exiſtence, can have exiſted from eternity.

It is hard for a reader, who has not revolved this thought in his own mind, to follow in ſuch an abſtracted ſpeculation; but I have been the longer on it, becauſe I think

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it is a demonſtrative argument of the Being and Eternity of a God: and though there are many other demonſtrations which lead us to this great truth, I do not think we ought to lay aſide any proofs in this matter which the light of reaſon has ſuggeſted to us, eſpecially when it is ſuch a one as has been urged by men famous for their penetration and force of underſtanding, and which appears altogether concluſive to thoſe who will be at the pains to examine it.

Having thus conſidered that eternity which is paſt, according to the beſt idea we can frame of it, I ſhall now draw up thoſe ſeveral articles on this ſubject which are dictated to us by the light of reaſon, and which my be looked upon as the creed of a philoſopher in this great point.

Firſt, It is certain that no Being could have made itſelf; for if ſo, it muſt have acted before it was, which is a contradiction.

Secondly, That, therefore, ſome Being muſt have exiſted from all eternity.

Thirdly, That whatever exiſts after the manner of created beings, or according to any notions which we have of exiſtence, could not have exiſted from eternity.

Fourthly, that this eternal Being muſt therefore be the great Author of nature, The Ancient of Days, who, being at an infinite diſtance in his perfections from all finite and created beings, exiſts in a quite different manner from them, and in a manner of which they can have no idea.

I know that ſeveral of the Schoolmen who would not be thought ignorant of any thing, have pretended to explain the manner of God's exiſtence, by telling us, that he comprehends infinite duration in every moment: that eternity is with him a '*punctum ſtans*' a fixed point: or, which is as good ſenſe, an infinite inſtant: that nothing with reference to his exiſtence is either paſt or to come: to which the ingenious Mr. Cowley alludes, in his deſcription of heaven.

Nothing is there to come, and nothing paſt,
But an eternal NOW does always laſt.

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For my own part, I look upon these propositions as words that have no ideas annexed to them; and think men had better own their ignorance, than advance doctrines by which they mean nothing, and which, indeed, are self-contradictory. We cannot be too modest in our disquisitions, when we meditate on him who is environed with so much glory and perfection, who is the source of being, the fountain of all that existence which we and his whole creation derive from him. Let us therefore with the utmost humility acknowledge, that as some Being must necessarily have existed from eternity, so this Being does exist after an incomprehensible manner, since it is impossible for a Being to have existed from eternity, after our manner or notions of existence. Revelation confirms these natural dictates of reason in the accounts which it gives us of the Divine Existence, where it tells us, that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; that he is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending: that a thousand years are with him as one day, and one day as a thousand years; by which, and the like expressions we are taught, that his existence, with relation to time or duration, is infinitely different from the existence of any of his creatures, and consequently that it is impossible for us to frame any adequate conceptions of it.

In the first revelation which he makes of his own Being, he intitles himself, 'I am that I am; and when Moses desires to know what name he shall give him in his embassy to Pharaoh, he bids him say that 'I am' hath sent you. Our great Creator, by this revelation of himself, does in a manner exclude every thing else from a real existence, and distinguishes himself from his creatures, as the only Being which truly and really exists. The ancient Platonic notion, which was drawn from speculations of eternity, wonderfully agrees with this revelation which God has made of himself. There is nothing, say they, which in reality exists, whose existence, as we call it, is pieced up of past, present, and to come. Such a flitting and successive existence is rather a shadow

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of exiſtence, and ſomething which is like it, than exiſtence itſelf. He only properly exiſts whoſe exiſtence is entirely preſent; that is, in other words, who exiſts in the moſt perfect manner, and in ſuch a manner as we have no idea of.

I ſhall conclude this ſpeculation with one uſeful inference. How can we ſufficiently proſtrate ourſelves and fall down before our Maker, when we conſider that ineffable goodneſs and wiſdom which contrived this exiſtence for finite natures? What muſt be the overflowings of that good-will, which prompted our Creator to adapt exiſtence to beings, in whom it is not neceſſary? Eſpecially when we conſider that he himſelf was before in the complete poſſeſſion of exiſtence and of happineſs, and in the full enjoyment of eternity. What man can think of himſelf as called out and ſeparated from nothing, of his being made a conſcious, a reaſonable and happy creature, in ſhort, of being taken in as a ſharer of his exiſtence, and a kind of partner in eternity, without being ſwallowed up in wonder, in praiſe, in adoration! It is, indeed, a thought too big for the mind of man, and rather to be entertained in the ſecreſy of devotion, and in the ſilence of the ſoul, than to be expreſſed by words. The Supreme Being has not given us powers or faculties ſufficient to extol and magnify ſuch unutterable goodneſs.

It is however ſome comfort to us, that we ſhall always be doing what we ſhall be never able to do, and that a work which cannot be finiſhed, will, however, be the work of eternity.

SECTION II.

The Power and Wiſdom of God in the Creation.

Inde hominum pecudumque genus, vitæque volantum,
Et quæ marmoreo fert monſtra ſub æquore pontus. VIRG.

THOUGH there is a great deal of pleaſure in contemplating the material world, by which I mean that ſyſtem of bodies into which nature has ſo curiouſly wrought the maſs of dead matter, with the ſeveral relations which thoſe bodies bear to one another; there is ſtill, methinks, ſomething more wonderful and ſurpriſing

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in contemplations on the world of life, by which I mean all those animals with which every part of the universe is furnished. The material world is only the shell of the universe: The world of life are its inhabitants.

If we consider those parts of the material world which lie the nearest to us, and are, therefore, subject to our observations and enquiries, it is amazing to consider the infinity of animals with which it is stocked. Every part of matter is peopled: Every green leaf swarms with inhabitants. There is scarce a single humour in the body of a man, or of any other animal, in which our glasses do not discover myriads of living creatures. The surface of animals is also covered with other animals, which are, in the same manner, the basis of other animals, that live upon it; nay, we find in the most solid bodies, as in marble itself, innumerable cells and cavities that are crowded with such imperceptible inhabitants, as are too little for the naked eye to discover. On the other hand, if we look into the more bulky parts of nature, we see the seas, lakes and rivers teeming with numberless kinds of living creatures: We find every mountain and marsh, wilderness and wood, plentifully stocked with birds and beasts, and every part of matter affording proper necessaries and conveniences for the livelihood of multitudes which inhabit it.

The author of the Plurality of Worlds draws a very good argument from this consideration, for the peopling of every planet; as, indeed, it seems very probable from the analogy of reason, that if no part of matter, which we are acquainted with, lies waste and useless, those great bodies which are at such a distance from us should not be defart and unpeopled, but rather that they should be furnished with beings adapted to their respective situations.

Existence is a blessing to those beings only which are endowed with perception, and is in a manner thrown away upon dead matter, any further than as it is subservient to beings which are conscious to their existence. Accordingly we find, from the bodies which lie under our observation,

obſervation, that matter is only made as the baſis and ſupport of animals, and that there is no more of the one than what is neceſſary for the exiſtence of the other.

Infinite Goodneſs is of ſo communicative a nature, that it ſeems to delight in the conferring of exiſtence upon every degree of perceptive being. As this is a ſpeculation, which I have often purſued with great pleaſure to myſelf, I ſhall enlarge farther upon it, by conſidering that part of the ſcale of beings which comes within our knowledge.

There are ſome living creatures which are raiſed but juſt above dead matter. To mention only that ſpecies of ſhell-fiſh, which are formed in the faſhion of a cone, that grow to the ſurface of ſeveral rocks, and immediately die upon their being ſevered from that place where they grow. There are many other creatures but one remove from theſe, which have no other ſenſe beſides that of feeling and taſte. Others have ſtill an additional one of hearing; others of ſmell, and others of ſight. It is wonderful to obſerve, by what a gradual progreſs the world of life advances through a prodigious variety of ſpecies, before a creature is formed that is complete in all its ſenſes; and even among theſe there is ſuch a different degree of perfection in the ſenſe which one animal enjoys beyond what appears in another, that though the ſenſe in different animals be diſtinguiſhed by the ſame common denomination, it ſeems almoſt of a different nature. If after this we look into the ſeveral inward perfections of cunning and ſagacity, or what we generally call inſtinct, we find them riſing after the ſame manner, imperceptibly one above another, and receiving additional improvements according to the ſpecies in which they are implanted. This progreſs in Nature is ſo very gradual, that the moſt perfect of an inferior ſpecies comes very near to the moſt imperfect of that which is immediately above it.

The exuberant and overflowing goodneſs of the Supreme Being, whoſe mercy extends to all his works, is plainly ſeen, as I have before hinted, from his having

made ſo very little matter, at leaſt what falls within our knowledge, that does not ſwarm with life: Nor is his goodneſs leſs ſeen in the diverſity, than in the multitude of living creatures. Had he only made one ſpecies of animals, none of the reſt would have enjoyed the happineſs of exiſtence; he has, therefore, ſpecified in his creation every degree of life, every capacity of being. The whole chaſm in nature, from a plant to a man, is filled up with divers kinds of creatures, riſing one over another, by ſuch a gentle and eaſy aſcent, that the little tranſitions and deviations from one ſpecies to another, are almoſt inſenſible. This intermediate ſpace is ſo well huſbanded and managed, that there is ſcarce a degree of perception which does not appear in ſome one part of the world of life. Is the goodneſs or wiſdom of the Divine Being, more manifeſted in this his proceeding?

There is a conſequence, beſides thoſe I have already mentioned, which ſeems very naturally deducible from the foregoing conſiderations. If the ſcale of being riſes by ſuch a regular progreſs, ſo high as man, we may, by a parity of reaſon, ſuppoſe that it ſtill proceeds gradually through thoſe beings which are of a ſuperior nature to him: ſince there is an infinitely greater ſpace and room for different degrees of perfection, between the Supreme Being and man, than between man and the moſt deſpicable inſect. This conſequence of ſo great a variety of Beings which are ſuperior to us, from that variety which is inferior to us, is made by Mr. Locke, in a paſſage which I ſhall here ſet down, after having premiſed, that notwithſtanding there is ſuch infinite room between man and his Maker for the creative power to exert itſelf in, it is impoſſible that it ſhould ever be filled up, ſince there will ſtill be an infinite gap or diſtance between the higheſt created being, and the Power which produced him.

'That there ſhould be more ſpecies of intelligent 'creatures above us, than there are of ſenſible and ma- 'terial below us, is probable to me from hence; that in 'all the viſible corporeal world, we ſee no chaſms, nor 'gaps.

'gaps. All quite down from us, the deſcent is by eaſy 'ſteps, and continual ſeries of things, that in each re-'move differ very little one from the other. There are 'fiſhes that have wings, and are not ſtrangers to the airy 'region: and there are ſome birds, that are inhabitants 'of the water, whoſe blood is cold as fiſhes, and their 'fleſh ſo like in taſte, that the ſcrupulous are allowed 'them on fiſh-days. There are animals ſo near of kin 'both of birds and beaſts, that they are in the middle 'between them both; amphibious animals link the ter-'reſtrial and aquatic together; ſeals live at land and at 'ſea, and porpoiſes have the warm blood and entrails of 'a hog; not to mention what is confidently reported of 'mermaids or ſeamen. There are ſome brutes, that ſeem 'to have as much knowledge and reaſon, as ſome that are 'called men; and the animal and vegetable kingdoms 'are ſo nearly joined, that if you will take the loweſt of 'one, and the higheſt of the other, there will ſcarce be per-'ceived any great difference between them: and ſo on 'till we come to the loweſt the and moſt inorganical parts 'of matter, we ſhall find every where that the ſeveral ſpe-'cies are linked together, and differ but in almoſt inſen-'ſible degrees. And when we conſider the infinite power 'and wiſdom of the Maker, we have reaſon to think that 'it is ſuitable to the magnificent harmony of the univerſe, 'and the great deſign and infinite goodneſs of the archi-'tect, that the ſpecies of creatures ſhould alſo, by gentle 'degrees, aſcend upwards from us towards his infinite 'perfection, as we ſee they gradually deſcend from us 'downwards; which, if it be probable, we have reaſon 'then to be perſuaded, that there are far more ſpecies of 'creatures above us, than there are beneath; we being in 'degrees of perfection much more remote from the infi-'nite Being of God, than we are from the loweſt ſtate of 'being, and that which approaches neareſt to nothing. 'And yet of all theſe diſtinct ſpecies, we have no clear 'diſtinct ideas.'

In this ſyſtem of being, there is no creature ſo wonderful in its nature, and which ſo much deſerves our particular

attention, as man, who fills up the middle ſpace between the animal and intellectual nature, the viſible and inviſible world, and is that link in the chain of beings, which has been often termed the 'nexus utriuſque mundi.' So that he who in one reſpect is aſſociated with angels and archangels, may look upon a Being of infinite perfection as his father, and the higheſt order of ſpirits as his brethren, may in another reſpect ſay to corruption, 'thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother, and my ſiſter.'

O.

----------Facies non omnibus una,
Nec diverſa tamen---------- OVID.

THOSE who were ſkilled in anatomy among the ancients concluded from the outward and inward make of an human body, that it was the work of a Being tranſcendently wiſe and powerful. As the world grew more enlightened in this art, their diſcoveries gave them freſh opportunities of admiring the conduct of Providence in the formation of an human body. Galen was converted by his diſſections, and could not but own a Supreme Being upon a ſurvey of this his handy-work. There were, indeed, many parts of which the old anatomiſts did not know the certain uſe; but as they ſaw that moſt of thoſe which they examined were adapted with admirable art to their ſeveral functions, they did not queſtion but thoſe, whoſe uſes they could not determine, were contrived with the ſame wiſdom for reſpective ends and purpoſes. Since the circulation of the blood has been found out, and many other great diſcoveries have been made by our modern anatomiſts, we ſee new wonders in the human frame, and diſcern ſeveral important uſes for thoſe parts, which uſes the ancients knew nothing of. In ſhort, the body of man is ſuch a ſubject as ſtands the utmoſt teſt of examination. Though it appears formed with the niceſt wiſdom, upon the moſt ſuperficial ſurvey of it, it ſtill mends upon the ſearch, and produces our ſurpriſe and amazement in proportion as we pry into it. What I have here ſaid of an human body, may be applied to the body of every animal which has been the ſubject of anatomical obſervations.

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The body of an animal is an object adequate to our ſenſes. It is a particular ſyſtem of Providence, that lies in a narrow compaſs. The eye is able to command it, and by ſucceſſive enquiries can ſearch into all its parts. Could the body of the whole earth, or, indeed, the whole univerſe, be thus ſubmitted to the examination of our ſenſes, were it not too big and diſproportioned for our enquiries, too unwieldy for the management of the eye and hand, there is no queſtion but it would appear to us as curious and well-contrived a frame as that of an human body. We ſhould ſee the ſame concatenation and ſubſerviency, the ſame neceſſity and uſefulneſs, the ſame beauty and harmony in all and every of its parts, as what we diſcover in the body of every ſingle animal.

The more extended our reaſon is, and the more able to grapple with immenſe objects, the greater ſtill are thoſe diſcoveries which it makes of wiſdom and providence in the work of the creation. A Sir Iſaac Newton, who ſtands up as the miracle of the preſent age, can look through a whole planetary ſyſtem; conſider it in its weight, number and meaſure: and draw from it as many demonſtrations of infinite power and wiſdom, as a more confined underſtanding is able to deduce from the ſyſtem of an human body.

But to return to our ſpeculations on anatomy. I ſhall here conſider the fabric and texture of the bodies of animals in one particular view; which, in my opinion, ſhews the hand of a thinking and all-wiſe Being in their formation, with the evidence of a thouſand demonſtrations. I think we may lay this down as an inconteſted principle, that chance never acts in a perpetual uniformity and conſiſtence with itſelf. If one ſhould always fling the ſame number with ten thouſand dice, or ſee every throw juſt five times leſs, or five times more in number than the throw which immediately preceded it, who would not imagine there is ſome inviſible power which directs the caſt? This is the proceeding which we find in the operations of nature. Every kind of animal is diverſified by different magnitudes, each of which gives riſe to a different ſpecies

Let a man trace the dog or lion-kind, and he will obſerve how many of the works of nature are publiſhed, if I may uſe the expreſſion, in a variety of editions. If we look into the reptile world, or into thoſe different kinds of animals that fill the element of water, we meet with the ſame repetitions among ſeveral ſpecies, that differ very little from one another, but in ſize and bulk. You find the ſame creature that is drawn at large, copied out in ſeveral proportions, and ending in miniature. It would be tedious to produce inſtances of this regular conduct in Providence, as it would be ſuperfluous to thoſe who are verſed in the natural hiſtory of animals. The magnificent harmony of the univerſe is ſuch, that we may obſerve innumerable diviſions running upon the ſame ground. I might alſo extend this ſpeculation to the dead parts of nature, in which we may find matter diſpoſed into many ſimilar ſyſtems, as well in our ſurvey of ſtars and planets, as of ſtones, vegetables, and other ſublunary parts of the creation. In a word, Providence has ſhewn the richneſs of its goodneſs and wiſdom, not only in the production of many original ſpecies, but in the multiplicity of deſcants which it has made on every original ſpecies in particular.

But to purſue this thought ſtill farther: every living creature conſidered in itſelf, has many very complicated parts that are exact copies of ſome other parts which it poſſeſſes, and which are complicated in the ſame manner. One eye would have been ſufficient for the ſubſiſtence and preſervation of an animal; but, in order to better his condition, we ſee another placed with a mathematical exactneſs in the ſame moſt advantageous ſituation, and in every particular of the ſame ſize and texture. Is it poſſible for chance to be thus delicate and uniform in her operations? Should a million of dice turn up twice together the ſame number, the number would be nothing in compariſon with this. But when we ſee this ſimilitude and reſemblance in the arm, the hand, the fingers; when we ſee one half of the body entirely correſpond with the other in all theſe minute ſtrokes, without which

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a man might have very well ſubſiſted; nay, when we often ſee a ſingle part repeated an hundred times in the ſame body, notwithſtanding it conſiſts of the moſt intricate weaving of numberleſs fibres, and theſe parts differing ſtill in magnitude, as the convenience of their particular ſituation requires; ſure a man muſt have a ſtrange caſt of underſtanding, who does not diſcover the finger of God in ſo wonderful a work. The duplicates in thoſe parts of the body, without which a man might have very well ſubſiſted, though not ſo well as with them, are a plain demonſtration of an all-wiſe Contriver; as thoſe more numerous copyings, which are found among the veſſels of the ſame body, are evident demonſtrations that they could not be the work of chance. This argument receives additional ſtrength, if we apply it to every animal and inſect within our knowledge, as well as to thoſe numberleſs living creatures that are objects too minute for a human eye: and if we conſider how the ſeveral ſpecies in the whole world of life reſemble one another, in very many particulars, ſo far as is convenient for their reſpective ſtates of exiſtence; it is much more probable that an hundred million of dice ſhould be caſually thrown an hundred million of times in the ſame number, than that the body of any ſingle animal ſhould be produced by the fortuitous concourſe of matter. And that the like chance ſhould ariſe in innumerable inſtances, requires a degree of credulity that is not under the direction of common ſenſe. We may carry this conſideration yet further, if we reflect on the two ſexes in every living ſpecies, with their reſemblances to each other, and thoſe particular diſtinctions that were neceſſary for the keeping up of this great world of life.

There are many more demonſtrations of a Supreme Being, and of his tranſcendent wiſdom, power and goodneſs in the formation of the body of a living creature, for which I refer my reader to other writings, particularly to the ſixth book of the Poem, entitled Creation, where the anatomy of the human body is deſcribed with great perſpicuity and elegance. I have been particular on the thought

thought which runs through this ſpeculation, becauſe I have not ſeen it enlarged upon by others. O.

Jupiter eſt quodcunque vides—— LUCAN.

I HAD this morning a very valuable and kind preſent ſent me, of a tranſlated work of a moſt excellent foreign writer, who makes a very conſiderable figure in the learned and chriſtian world. It is entitled, 'A 'Demonſtration of the Exiſtence, Wiſdom, and Omnipo-'tence of God,' drawn from the knowledge of nature, particularly of man, and fitted to the meaneſt capacity, by the archbiſhop of Cambray, author of Telemachus, and tranſlated from the French by the ſame hand that Engliſhed that excellent piece. This great author, in the writings which he has before produced, has manifeſted an heart full of virtuous ſentiments, great benevolence to mankind, as well as a ſincere and fervent piety towards his Creator. His talents and parts are a very great good to the world, and it is a pleaſing thing to behold the polite arts ſubſervient to religion, and recommending it from its natural beauty. Looking over the letters of my correſpondents, I find one which celebrates this treatiſe, and recommends it to my readers.

'SIR, TO THE GUARDIAN.

'I THINK I have ſomewhere read, in the writings of 'one whom I take to be a friend of yours, a ſaying 'which ſtruck me very much, and, as I remember, it was 'to this purpoſe: "The Exiſtence of a God is ſo far "from being a thing that wants to be proved, that I "think it the only thing of which we are certain." This 'is a ſprightly and juſt expreſſion; however, I dare ſay, 'you will not be diſpleaſed that I put you in mind of ſay-'ing ſomething on the Demonſtration of the biſhop of 'Cambray. A man of his talents views all things in a 'light different from that in which ordinary men ſee them, 'and the devout diſpoſition of his ſoul turns all thoſe 'talents to the improvement of the pleaſures of a good 'life. His ſtyle clothes philoſophy in a dreſs almoſt po-'etic, and his readers enjoy in full perfection the advan-

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'tage, while they are reading him, of being what he is. 'The pleaſing repreſentation of the animal powers in the 'beginning of his work, and his conſideration of the na-'ture of man with the addition of reaſon, in the ſubſe-'quent diſcourſe, impreſſes upon the mind a ſtrong ſatiſ-'faction in itſelf, and gratitude towards him who be-'ſtowed that ſuperiority over the brute world. Theſe 'thoughts had ſuch an effect upon the author himſelf, 'that he has ended his diſcourſe with a prayer. This 'adoration has a ſublimity in it befitting his character, 'and the emotions of his heart flow from wiſdom and 'knowledge. I thought it would be proper for a Sa-'turday's paper, and have tranſlated it, to make you a 'preſent of it. I have not, as the tranſlator was obliged 'to do, confined myſelf to an exact verſion from the ori-'ginal, but have endeavoured to expreſs the ſpirit of it, 'by taking the liberty to render his thoughts in ſuch a 'way as I ſhould have uttered them, if they had been my 'own. It has been obſerved, that the private letters of 'great men are the beſt pictures of their ſouls, but cer-'tainly their private devotions would be ſtill more in-'ſtructive, and I know not why they ſhould not be as 'curious and entertaining.

'If you inſert this prayer, I know not but I may 'ſend you, for another occaſion, one uſed by a very great 'wit of the laſt age, which has alluſions to the errors of 'a very wild life, and I believe you will think is written 'with an uncommon ſpirit. The perſon whom I mean 'was an excellent writer, and the publication of this 'prayer of his may be, perhaps, ſome kind of antidote 'againſt the infection of his other writings. But this 'ſupplication of the biſhop has in it a more happy and 'untroubled ſpirit; it is (if that is not ſaying ſomething 'too fond) the worſhip of an angel concerned for thoſe 'who had fallen, but himſelf ſtill in a ſtate of glory and 'innocence. The book ends with an act of devotion, 'to this effect.

'O my God, if the greater number of mankind do 'not diſcover thee in that glorious ſhew of nature, which

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'thou haſt placed before our eyes, it is not becauſe thou 'art far from every one of us; thou art preſent to us 'more than any one object which we touch with our 'hands; but our ſenſes, and the paſſions which they pro-'duce in us, turn our attention from thee. Thy light 'ſhines in the midſt of darkneſs, but the darkneſs com-'prehends it not. Thou, O Lord, doſt every where 'diſplay thyſelf. Thou ſhineſt in all thy works, but art 'not regarded by heedleſs and unthinking man. The 'whole creation talks aloud of thee, and echoes with the 'repetition of thy holy name. But ſuch is our inſenſi-'bility, that we are deaf to the great and univerſal voice 'of nature. Thou art every where about us, and within 'us; but we wander from ourſelves, become ſtrangers 'to our own ſouls, and do not apprehend thy preſence. 'O thou, who art the eternal fountain of light and beau-'ty, who art the ancient of days, without beginning 'and without end: O thou, who art the life of all that 'truly live, thoſe can never fail to find thee, who ſeek 'for thee within themſelves. But, alas! the very gifts 'which thou beſtoweſt upon us, do ſo employ our thoughts 'that they hinder us from perceiving the hand which 'conveys them to us. We live by thee, and yet we live 'without thinking of thee; but, O Lord, what is life in 'the ignorance of thee? A dead unactive piece of matter, 'a flower that withers, a river that glides away, a palace 'that haſtens to its ruin, a picture made up of fading co-'lours, a maſs of ſhining ore, ſtrike our imaginations, 'and make us ſenſible of their exiſtence. We regard 'them as objects capable of giving us pleaſure, not con-'ſidering that thou conveyeſt through them all the plea-'ſure which we imagine they give us. Such vain empty 'objects, that are only the ſhadows of being, are pro-'portioned to our low and groveling thoughts. That 'beauty which thou haſt poured out on thy creation, is 'as a veil which hides thee from our eyes. As thou art 'a Being too pure and exalted to paſs through our ſenſes, 'thou art not regarded by men, who have debaſed their 'nature, and have made themſelves like the beaſts that 'periſh.

'periſh. So infatuated are they, that, notwithſtanding 'they know what is wiſdom and virtue, which have nei-'ther ſound, nor colour, nor ſmell, nor taſte, nor figure, 'nor any other ſenſible quality, they can doubt of thy 'exiſtence, becauſe thou art not apprehended by the groſ-'ſer organs of ſenſe. Wretches that we are! we conſider 'ſhadows as realities, and truth as a phantom. That 'which is nothing is all to us, and that which is all ap-'pears to us nothing. What do we ſee in all nature but 'thee, O my God! thou, and only thou appeareſt in 'every thing. When I conſider thee, O Lord, I am ſwal-'lowed up and loſt in contemplation of thee, every thing 'beſides thee, even my own exiſtence, vaniſhes and diſap-'pears in the contemplation of thee. I am loſt to my-'ſelf, and fall into nothing, when I think on thee. The 'man who does not ſee thee has beheld nothing: he 'who does not taſte thee, has a reliſh of nothing. His be-'ing is vain, and his life but a dream. Set up thyſelf, 'O Lord, ſet up thyſelf that we may behold thee. As 'wax conſumes before the fire, and as the ſmoke is driven 'away, ſo let thine enemies vaniſh out of thy preſence. 'How unhappy is that ſoul who, without the ſenſe of thee, 'has no God, no hope, no comfort, to ſupport him? but 'how happy the man who ſearches, ſighs, and thirſts 'after thee! but he only is fully happy on whom thou 'lifteſt up the light of thy countenance, whoſe tears thou 'haſt wiped away, and who enjoys, in thy loving kind-'neſs, the completion of all his deſires. How long, how 'long, O Lord, ſhall I wait for that day, when I ſhall 'poſſeſs in thy preſence, fulneſs of joy and pleaſures for 'evermore? O my God, in this pleaſing hope, my bones 'rejoice and cry out, Who is like unto thee! my heart 'melts away, and my ſoul faints within me, when I look 'up to thee who art the God of my life, and my por-'tion to all eternity.'

SECTION

SECTION III.

The Providence of God.

Visu carentem magna pars veri latet. SEN. in OEdip.

IT is very reasonable to believe, that part of the pleasure which happy minds shall enjoy in a future state, will arise from an enlarged contemplation of the Divine Wisdom in the government of the world, and a discovery of the secret and amazing steps of Providence from the beginning to the end of time. Nothing seems to be an entertainment more adapted to the nature of man, if we consider that curiosity is one of the strongest and most lasting appetites implanted in us, and that admiration is one of our most pleasing passions; and what a perpetual succession of enjoyments will be afforded to both these in a scene so large and various as shall then be laid open to our view in the society of superior spirits, who, perhaps, will join with us in so delightful a prospect!

It is not impossible, on the contrary, that part of the punishment of such as are excluded from bliss, may consist not only in their being denied this privilege, but in having their appetites at the same time vastly increased, without any satisfaction afforded to them. In these, the vain pursuit of knowledge shall, perhaps, add to their infelicity, and bewilder them into labyrinths of error, darkness, distraction, and uncertainty of every thing but their own evil state. Milton has thus represented the fallen angels reasoning together in a kind of respite from their torments, and creating to themselves a new disquiet amidst their very amusements; he could not properly have described the sports of condemned spirits, without that cast of horror and melancholy he has so judiciously mingled with them.

> Others apart sat on a hill retir'd,
> In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
> Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate.
> Fixt Fate, Freewill, Foreknowledge absolute,
> And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.

In our present condition, which is a middle state, our minds are, as it were, chequered with truth and falsehood; and as our faculties are narrow and our views imperfect,

perfect, it is impoſſible but our curioſity muſt meet with many repulſes. The buſineſs of mankind in this life being rather to act than to know, their portion of knowledge is dealt to them accordingly.

From hence it is, that the reaſon of the inquiſitive has ſo long been exerciſed with difficulties, in accounting for the promiſcuous diſtribution of good and evil to the virtuous and the wicked in this world. From hence come all thoſe pathetic complaints of ſo many tragical events, which happen to the wiſe and the good; and of ſuch ſurpriſing proſperity, which is often the reward of the guilty and the fooliſh; that reaſon is ſometimes puzzled, and at a loſs what to pronounce upon ſo myſterious a diſpenſation.

Plato expreſſes his abhorrence of ſome fables of the Poets, which ſeem to reflect on the gods as the authors of injuſtice; and lays it down as a principle that, whatever is permitted to befal a juſt man, whether poverty, ſickneſs, or any of thoſe things which ſeem to be evils, ſhall either in life or death conduce to his good. My reader will obſerve how agreeable this maxim is to what we find delivered by a greater authority. Seneca has written a diſcourſe purpoſely on this ſubject, in which he takes pains, after the doctrine of the Stoicks, to ſhew, that adverſity is not in itſelf an evil; and mentions a noble ſaying of Demetrius, that 'nothing would 'be more unhappy than a man who had never known 'affliction.' He compares proſperity to the indulgence of a fond mother to a child, which often proves his ruin; but the affection of the Divine Being to that of a wiſe father, who would have his ſons exerciſed with labour, diſappointment, and pain, that they may gather ſtrength and improve their fortitude. On this occaſion the philoſopher riſes into that celebrated ſentiment, that there is not on earth a ſpectacle more worthy the regard of a Creator intent on his works, than a brave man ſuperior to his ſufferings; to which he adds, that it muſt be a pleaſure to Jupiter himſelf to look down from heaven, and ſee Cato, amidſt the ruins of this country, preſerving his integrity.

This thought will appear yet more reasonable, if we consider human life as a state of probation, and adversity as the post of honour in it, assigned often to the best and most select spirits.

But what I would chiefly insist on here, is, that we are not at present in a proper situation to judge of the councils by which providence acts, since but little arrives at our knowledge, and even that little we discern imperfectly: or, according to the elegant figure in Holy Writ, 'We see but in part, and as in a glass darkly.' It is to be considered, that Providence in its œconomy regards the whole system of time and things together, so that we cannot discover the beautiful connections between incidents which lie widely separate in time, and by losing so many links of the chain, our reasonings become broken and imperfect. Thus those parts in the moral world, which have not an absolute, may yet have a relative beauty, in respect to some other parts concealed from us, but open to his eye, before whom Past, Present and To come, are set together in one point of view: and those events, the permission of which seems now to accuse his goodness, may, in the consummation of things, both magnify his goodness, and exalt his wisdom. And this is enough to check our presumption, since it is in vain to apply our measures of regularity to matters of which we know neither the antecedents nor the consequents, the beginning nor the end.

I shall relieve my readers from this abstracted thought, by relating here a Jewish tradition concerng Moses, which seems to be a kind of parable, illustrating what I have last mentioned. That great prophet, it is said, was called up, by a voice from heaven, to the top of a mountain; where, in a conference with the Supreme Being, he was permitted to propose to him some questions concerning his administration of the universe. In the midst of this Divine Colloquy he was commanded to look down on the plain below. At the foot of the mountain there issued out a clear spring of water, at which a soldier alighted from his horse to drink. He was no sooner gone than a

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little boy came to the ſame place, and finding a purſe of gold, which the ſoldier had dropped, took it up, and went away with it. Immediately after this came an infirm old man, weary with age and travelling, and having quenched his thirſt, ſat down to reſt himſelf by the ſide of the ſpring. The ſoldier miſſing his purſe, returns to ſearch for it, and demands it of the old man, who affirms he had not ſeen it, and appeals to heaven in witneſs of his innocence. The ſoldier not believing his proteſtation, kills him. Moſes fell on his face with horror and amazement, when the Divine Voice thus prevented his expoſtulation. 'Be not ſurpriſed, Moſes, nor 'aſk why the Judge of the whole earth has ſuffered 'this thing to come to paſs: the child is the occaſion 'that the blood of the old man is ſpilt; but know, 'that the old man whom thou ſaweſt, was the murderer of that child's father.'

Παϲιν γαϱ ευϕϱονεϲι ϲυμμαχει τυχη.

Frag. Vet. Poet

THE famous Gratian, in his little book wherein he lays down maxims for a man's advancing himſelf at court, adviſes his reader to aſſociate himſelf with the fortunate, and to ſhun the company of the unfortunate; which notwithſtanding the baſeneſs of the precept to an honeſt mind, may have ſomething uſeful in it for thoſe who puſh their intereſt in the world. It is certain, a great part of what we call good or ill fortune, riſes out of right or wrong meaſures and ſchemes of life. When I hear a man complain of his being unfortunate in all his undertakings, I ſhrewdly ſuſpect him for a very weak man in his affairs. In conformity with this way of thinking, Cardinal Richlieu uſed to ſay, that unfortunate and imprudent were but two words for the ſame thing. As the Cardinal himſelf had a great ſhare both of prudence and good fortune, his famous antagoniſt, the Count d'Olivarez, was diſgraced at the court of Madrid, becauſe it was alledged againſt him, that he had

never any ſucceſs in his undertakings. This, ſays an eminent author, was indirectly accuſing him of imprudence.

Cicero recommended Pompey to the Romans for their general upon three accounts; as he was a man of courage, conduct, and good fortune. It was, perhaps, for the reaſon above-mentioned, namely, that a ſeries of good fortune, ſuppoſes a prudent management in the perſon whom it befals, that not only Sylla the dictator, but ſeveral of the Roman emperors, as is ſtill to be ſeen upon their medals, among their other titles, gave themſelves that of Felix, or fortunate. The heathens, indeed, ſeem to have valued a man more for his good fortune, than for any other quality, which I think is very natural for thoſe who have not a ſtrong belief of another world. For how can I conceive a man crowned with many diſtinguiſhing bleſſings, that has not ſome extraordinary fund of merit and perfection in him, which lies open to the Supreme eye, though perhaps it is not diſcovered by my obſervation? What is the reaſon Homer's and Virgil's heroes do not form a reſolution, or ſtrike a blow, without the conduct and direction of ſome deity? Doubtleſs, becauſe the poets eſteemed it the greateſt honour to be favoured by the gods, and thought the beſt way of praiſing a man was to recount thoſe favours which naturally implied an extraordinary merit in the perſon on whom they deſcended.

Thoſe who believe a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments act very abſurdly, if they form their opinions of a man's merit from his ſucceſſes. But, certainly, if I thought the whole circle of our being was concluded between our births and deaths, I ſhould think a man's good fortune, the meaſure and ſtandard of his real merit, ſince providence would have no opportunity of rewarding his virtue and perfections, but in the preſent life. A virtuous unbeliever, who lies under the preſſure of misfortunes, has reaſon to cry out, as they ſay Brutus did a little before his death, 'O virtue, I have

'worſhipped

'worſhipped thee as a ſubſtantial good, but I find thou 'art an empty name.'

But to return to our firſt point: though prudence does undoubtedly, in a great meaſure, produce our good or ill fortune, in the world, it is certain there are many unforeſeen accidents and occurrences, which very often pervert the fineſt ſchemes that can be laid by human wiſdom. The race is not always to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong. Nothing leſs than Infinite wiſdom can have an abſolute command over fortune; the higheſt degree of it, which man can poſſeſs, is by no means equal to fortuitous events, and to ſuch contingencies as may riſe in the proſecution of our affairs. Nay, it very often happens, that prudence, which has always in it, a great mixture of caution, hinders a man from being ſo fortunate as he might poſſibly have been without it. A perſon who only aims at what is likely to ſucceed, and follows cloſely the dictates of human prudence, never meets with thoſe great and unforeſeen ſucceſſes, which are only the effect of a ſanguine temper, or a more happy raſhneſs; and this, perhaps, may be the reaſon, that according to the common obſervation, fortune, like other females, delights rather in favouring the young than the old.

Upon the whole, ſince man is ſo ſhort ſighted a creature, and the accidents which may happen to him ſo various, I cannot but be of Dr. Tillotſon's opinion in another caſe, that were there any doubt of a providence, yet it certainly would be very deſirable there ſhould be ſuch a Being of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, on whoſe direction we might rely in the conduct of human life.

It is a great preſumption to aſcribe our ſucceſſes to our own management, and not to eſteem ourſelves upon any bleſſing, rather as it is the bounty of heaven, than the acquiſition of our own prudence. I am very well pleaſed with a medal, which was ſtruck by Queen Elizabeth, a little after the defeat of the invincible Armada, to perpetuate the memory of that extraordi-

nary event. It is well known how the king of Spain, and others who were the enemies of that great princeſs, to derogate from her glory, aſcribed the ruin of their fleet, rather to the violence of ſtorms and tempeſts, than to the bravery of the Engliſh. Queen Elizabeth, inſtead of looking upon this as a diminution of her honour, valued herſelf upon ſuch a ſignal favour of providence, and accordingly in the reverſe of the medal above mentioned, has repreſented a fleet beaten by a tempeſt, and falling foul upon one another, with that religious inſcription, *Afflavit Deus & diſſipantur*. 'He blew 'with his wind, and they were ſcattered.'

It is remarked of a famous Grecian general, whoſe name I cannot at preſent recollect, and who had been a particular favourite of fortune, that upon recounting his victories among his friends, he added at the end of ſeveral great actions, 'And in this, fortune had no 'ſhare.' After which it is obſerved in hiſtory, that he never proſpered in any thing he undertook.

As arrogance, and a conceitedneſs of our own abilities, are very ſhocking and offenſive to men of ſenſe and virtue, we may be ſure they are highly diſpleaſing to that Being who delights in an humble mind, and by ſeveral of his diſpenſations ſeems purpoſely to ſhew us, that our own ſchemes or prudence have no ſhare in our advancements.

Since on this ſubject I have already advanced ſeveral quotations which have occurred to my memory, upon writing this paper, I will conclude it with a little Perſian fable. A drop of water fell out of a cloud into the ſea, and finding itſelf loſt in ſuch an immenſity of fluid matter, broke out into the following reflection: 'Alas! what an inſignificant creature am I in this pro-'digious ocean of waters; my exiſtence is of no con-'cern to the univerſe, I am reduced to a kind of no-'thing, and am leſs than the leaſt of the works of 'God.' It ſo happened that an Oyſter, which lay in the neighbourhood of this drop, chanced to gape and ſwallow it up in the midſt of this its humble ſoliloquy.

The

The drop, says the fable, lay a great while hardening in the shell, till by degrees it was ripened into a pearl, which falling into the hands of a diver, after a long series of adventures, is at present that famous pearl which is fixed on the top of the Persian diadem.

Si fractus illabatur orbis
Impavidum ferient ruinæ. HOR.

MAN, considered in himself, is a very helpless and a very wretched being. He is subject every moment to the greatest calamities and misfortunes. He is beset with dangers on all sides, and may become unhappy by numberless casualties, which he could not foresee, nor have prevented, had he foreseen them.

It is our comfort, while we are obnoxious to so many accidents, that we are under the care of one who directs contingencies, and has in his hands, the management of every thing that is capable of annoying or offending us; who knows the assistance we stand in need of, and is always ready to bestow it on those who ask it of him.

The natural homage, which such a creature bears to so infinitely wise and good a Being, is a firm reliance on him for the blessings and conveniencies of life, and an habitual trust in him for deliverance out of all such dangers and difficulties as may befal us.

The man, who always lives in this disposition of mind, has not the same dark and melancholy views of human nature, as he who considers himself abstractedly from this relation to the Supreme Being. At the same time that he reflects upon his own weakness and imperfection, he comforts himself with the contemplation of those divine attributes, which are employed for his safety and his welfare. He finds his want of foresight made up by the omniscience of him who is his support. He is not sensible of his own want of strength, when he knows that his helper is Almighty. In short, the person who has a firm trust on the Supreme Being, is powerful in his power, wise by his wisdom, happy by his happiness. He reaps the benefit of every divine attribute,

tribute, and loſes his own inſufficiency in the fulneſs of infinite perfection.

To make our lives more eaſy to us, we are commanded to put our truſt in him, who is thus able to relieve and ſuccour us; the divine goodneſs having made ſuch a reliance a duty, notwithſtanding we ſhould have been miſerable, had it been forbidden us.

Among ſeveral motives, which might be made uſe of, to recommend this duty to us, I ſhall only take notice of thoſe that follow.

The firſt and ſtrongeſt is, that we are promiſed, he will not fail thoſe who put their truſt in him.

But without conſidering the ſupernatural bleſſing which accompanies this duty, we may obſerve that it has a natural tendency to its own reward, or in other words, that this firm truſt and confidence in the great diſpoſer of all things, contributes very much to the getting clear of any affliction, or to the bearing it manfully. A perſon who believes he has his ſuccour at hand, and that he acts in ſight of his friend, often exerts himſelf beyond his abilities, and does wonders that are not to be matched by one who is not animated with ſuch a confidence of ſucceſs. I could produce inſtances from hiſtory, of generals, who out of a belief that they were under the protection of ſome inviſible aſſiſtant, did not only encourage their ſoldiers to do their utmoſt, but have acted themſelves beyond what they would have done, had they not been inſpired by ſuch a belief. I might in the ſame manner ſhew how ſuch a truſt, in the aſſiſtance of an Almighty Being, naturally produces patience, hope, cheerfulneſs, and all other diſpoſitions of mind that alleviate thoſe calamities which we are not able to remove.

The practice of this virtue adminiſters great comfort to the mind of man, in times of poverty and affliction, but moſt of all in the hour of death. When the ſoul is hovering in the laſt moments of its ſeparation, when it is juſt entering on another ſtate of exiſtence, to converſe with ſcenes, and objects, and companions that are altogether

altogether new, what can ſupport her under ſuch trembl-ings of thought, ſuch fear, ſuch anxiety, ſuch apprehenſions, but the caſting of all her cares upon him who firſt gave her being, who has conducted her through one ſtage of it, and will be always with her, to guide and comfort her in her progreſs through eternity?

David has very beautifully repreſented this ſteady reliance on God Almighty, in his twenty-third pſalm, which is a kind of paſtoral hymn, and filled with thoſe alluſions which are uſual in that kind of writing. As the poetry is very exquiſite, I ſhall preſent my reader with the following tranſlation of it.

I.

The Lord my paſture ſhall prepare,
And feed me with a ſhepherd's care;
His preſence ſhall my wants ſupply,
And guard me with a watchful eye;
My noon-day walks he ſhall attend,
And all my midnight hours defend.

II.

When in the ſultry glebe I faint,
Or on the thirſty mountain pant;
To fertile vales, and dewy meads,
My weary wand'ring ſteps he leads;
Where peaceful rivers, ſoft and ſlow,
Amid the verdant landſkip flow.

III.

Tho' in the paths of death I tread,
With gloomy horrors overſpread,
My ſtedfaſt heart ſhall fear no ill,
For thou, O Lord, art with me ſtill;
Thy friendly crook ſhall give me aid,
And guide me through the dreadful ſhade.

IV.

Tho' in a bare and rugged way,
Through devious lonely wilds I ſtray,
Thy bounty ſhall my pains beguile:
The barren wilderneſs ſhall ſmile,
With ſudden greens and herbage crown'd,
And ſtreams ſhall murmur all around.

SECT.

SECTION IV.

The Worſhip of God.

Religentem eſſe oportet, Religioſum neſas.
Incerti Autoris apud AUL. GELL.

IT is of the laſt importance to ſeaſon the paſſions of a child with devotion, which ſeldom dies in a mind that has received an early tincture of it. Though it may ſeem extinguiſhed for a while by the cares of the world, the heats of youth, or the allurements of vice, it generally breaks out and diſcovers itſelf again, as ſoon as diſcretion, conſideration, age, or misfortunes have brought the man to himſelf. The fire may be covered and overlaid, but cannot be entirely quenched and ſmothered.

A ſtate of temperance, ſobriety, and juſtice, without devotion, is a cold lifeleſs, inſipid condition of virtue; and is rather to be ſtiled philoſophy than religion. Devotion opens the mind to great conceptions, and fills it with more ſublime ideas than any that are to be met with in the moſt exalted ſcience; and at the ſame time warms and agitates the ſoul more than ſenſual pleaſure.

It has been obſerved by ſome writers, that man is more diſtinguiſhed from the animal world by devotion than by reaſon, as ſeveral brute creatures diſcover in their actions ſomething like a faint glimmering of reaſon, though they betray in no ſingle circumſtance of their behaviour any thing that bears the leaſt affinity to devotion. It is certain, the propenſity of the mind to religious worſhip, the natural tendency of the ſoul to fly to ſome ſuperior being for ſuccour in dangers and diſtreſſes, the gratitude to an inviſible Superintendent which ariſes in us upon receiving any extraordinary and unexpected good fortune, the acts of love and admiration with which the thoughts of men are ſo wonderfully tranſported in meditating upon the Divine Perfections, and the univerſal concurrence of all the nations under heaven, in the great article of adoration, plainly ſhew that devotion or religious worſhip muſt be the effect of a tradition from ſome firſt founder of mankind, or that it is conformable to the natural light of reaſon, or that it proceeds from an inſtinct

implanted

ſmplanted in the ſoul itſelf. For my part, I look upon all theſe to be the concurrent cauſes, but which ever of them ſhall be aſſigned as the principle of divine worſhip, it manifeſtly points to a Supreme Being, as the firſt author of it.

I may take ſome other opportunity of conſidering thoſe particular forms and methods of devotion which are taught us by chriſtianity; but I ſhall here obſerve into what errors even this divine principle may ſometimes lead us, when it is not moderated by that right reaſon which was given us as the guide of all our actions.

The two great errors into which a miſtaken devotion may betray us, are enthuſiaſm and ſuperſtition.

There is not a more melancholy object than a man who has his head turned with religious enthuſiaſm. A perſon that is crazed, though with pride or malice, is a ſight very mortifying to human nature; but when the diſtemper ariſes from any indiſcreet fervors of devotion, or too intenſe an application of the mind to its miſtaken duties, it deſerves our compaſſion in a more particular manner. We may, however, learn this leſſon from it, that ſince devotion itſelf (which one would be apt to think could not be too warm) may diſorder the mind, unleſs its heats are tempered with caution and prudence, we ſhould be particularly careful to keep our reaſon as cool as poſſible, and to guard ourſelves in all parts of life againſt the influence of paſſion, imagination, and conſtitution.

Devotion, when it does not lie under the check of reaſon, is very apt to degenerate into enthuſiaſm. When the mind finds herſelf very much inflamed with her devotions, ſhe is too much inclined to think they are not of her own kindling, but blown up with ſomething divine within her. If ſhe indulges this thought too far, and humours the growing paſſion, ſhe at laſt flings herſelf into imaginary raptures and eſtaſies; and when once ſhe fancies herſelf under the influence of a divine impulſe, it is no wonder if ſhe ſlights human ordinances, and refuſes to comply with any eſtabliſhed form of religion, as thinking herſelf directed by a much ſuperior guide.

As

As enthuſiaſm is a kind of exceſs in devotion, ſuperſtition, is the exceſs not only of devotion but of religion in general; according to an old heathen ſaying, quoted by Aulus Gellius, *Religentem eſſe oportet, Religioſum nefas*; A man ſhould be religious, not ſuperſtitious; for as the author tells us, Nigidius obſerved upon this paſſage, that the Latin words which terminate in *oſus* generally imply vicious characters, and the having of any quality to an exceſs.

An enthuſiaſt in religion is like an obſtinate clown, a ſuperſtitious man like an inſipid courtier. Enthuſiaſm has ſomething in it of madneſs, ſuperſtition of folly. Moſt of the ſects that fall ſhort of the Church of England have in them ſtrong tinctures of enthuſiaſm, as the Roman Catholic religion is one huge overgrown body of childiſh and idle ſuperſtitions.

The Roman Catholic Church ſeems, indeed, irrecoverably loſt in this particular. If an abſurd dreſs or behaviour be introduced into the world, it will ſoon be found out and diſcarded. On the contrary, a habit or ceremony, though never ſo ridiculous, which has taken ſanctuary in the church, ſticks in it for ever. A Gothic Biſhop, perhaps, thought it proper to repeat ſuch a form in ſuch particular ſhoes or ſlippers; another fancied it would be very decent if ſuch a part of public devotions were performed with a mitre on his head, and a croſier in his hand: To this a brother Vandal, as wiſe as the others, adds an antic dreſs, which they conceived would allude very aptly to ſuch and ſuch myſteries, till by degrees the whole office has degenerated into an empty ſhow.

Their ſucceſſors ſee the vanity and inconvenience of theſe ceremonies; but, inſtead of reforming, perhaps add others, which they think more ſignificant, and which take poſſeſſion in the ſame manner, and are never to be driven out after they have been once admitted. I have ſeen the Pope officiate at St. Peter's, where, for two hours together, he was buſied in putting on or off his different accoutrements, according to the different parts he was to act in them.

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Nothing is ſo glorious in the eyes of mankind, and ornamental to human nature, ſetting aſide the infinite advantages which ariſe from it, as a ſtrong, ſteady, maſculine piety; but enthuſiaſm and ſuperſtition are the weakneſſes of human reaſon, that expoſe us to the ſcorn and deriſion of infidels, and ſink us even below the beaſts that periſh.

Idolatry may be looked upon as another error ariſing from miſtaken devotion; but becauſe reflections on that ſubject would be of no uſe to an engliſh reader, I ſhall not enlarge upon it.

L.

Omnibus incertis, quæ ſint a Gadibus uſque
Auroram & Gangen, pauci dignoſcere poſſunt
Vera bona, atque illis multum diverſa, remota
Erroris nebula. Juv.

IN my laſt Saturday's paper I laid down ſome thoughts upon devotion in general, and ſhall here ſhew what were the notions of the moſt refined heathens on this ſubject, as they are repreſented in Plato's dialogue upon prayer, entituled, Alcibiades the Second, which, doubtleſs gave occaſion to Juvenal's tenth Satire, and to the ſecond Satire of Perſius; as the laſt of theſe authors has almoſt tranſcribed the preceding dialogue, entituled, Alcibiades the Firſt, in his fourth Satire.

The ſpeakers in this dialogue upon Prayer, are Socrates and Alcibiades; and the ſubſtance of it (when drawn together out of the intricacies and digreſſions) as follows:

Socrates meeting his pupil Alcibiades, as he was going to his devotions, and obſerving his eyes to be fixed upon the earth with great ſeriouſneſs and attention, tells him, that he had reaſon to be thoughtful on that occaſion, ſince it was poſſible for a man to bring down evils upon himſelf by his own prayers, and that thoſe things which the gods ſend him in anſwer to his petitions might turn to his deſtruction. This, ſays he, may not only happen when a man prays for what he knows is miſchievous in its own nature, as Oedipus implored the gods to ſow diſſenſion between his ſons, but when he prays for what he believes would be for his good, and againſt what he believes would be to his detriment. This the Philoſopher

ſhews muſt neceſſarily happen among us, ſince moſt men are blinded with ignorance, prejudice, or paſſion, which hinder them from ſeeing ſuch things as are really beneficial to them. For an inſtance, he aſks Alcibiades whether he would not be thoroughly pleaſed and ſatisfied if that God to whom he was going to addreſs himſelf, ſhould promiſe to make him the ſovereign of the whole earth? Alcibiades anſwers, That he ſhould, doubtleſs, look upon ſuch a promiſe as the greateſt favour that could be beſtowed upon him. Socrates then aſked him, if after receiving this great favour he would be contented to loſe his life? or if he would receive it though he was ſure he ſhould make an ill uſe of it? To both which queſtions Alcibiades anſwers in the negative. Socrates then ſhews him, from the examples of others, how theſe might probably be the effects of ſuch a bleſſing. He then adds, that other reputed pieces of good fortune, as that of having a ſon, or procuring the higheſt poſt in a government, are ſubject to the like fatal conſequences; which, nevertheleſs, ſays he, men ardently deſire, and would not fail to pray for, if they thought their prayers might be effectual for the obtaining of them.

Having eſtabliſhed this great point, that all the moſt apparent bleſſings in this life are obnoxious to ſuch dreadful conſequences, and that no man knows what in its events would prove to him a bleſſing or a curſe, he teaches Alcibiades after what manner he ought to pray.

In the firſt place, he recommends to him, as the model of his devotions, a ſhort prayer, which a Greek poet compoſed for the uſe of his friends, in the following words; "O Jupiter, give us thoſe things which are good for us, whether they are ſuch things as we pray for; or ſuch things as we do not pray for; and remove from us thoſe things which are hurtful, though they are ſuch things as we pray for."

In the ſecond place, that his diſciple may aſk ſuch things as are expedient for him, he ſhews him, that it is abſolutely neceſſary to apply himſelf to the ſtudy of true wiſdom, and to the knowledge of that which is his chief

good.

good, and the moſt ſuitable to the excellency of his nature.

In the third and laſt place he informs him, that the beſt methods he could make uſe of to draw down bleſſings upon himſelf, and to render his prayers acceptable, would be to live in a conſtant practice of his duty towards the gods, and towards men. Under this head he very much recommends a form of prayer the Lacedæmonians made uſe of, in which they petition the gods, to give them all good things, ſo long as they were virtuous. Under this head likewiſe he gives a very remarkable account of an Oracle to the following purpoſe.

When the Athenians, in the war with the Lacedæmonians, received many defeats both by ſea and land, they ſent a meſſage to the oracle of Jupiter Ammon, to aſk the reaſon why they who erected ſo many temples to the gods, and adorned them with ſuch coſtly offerings; why they who had inſtituted ſo many feſtivals, and accompanied them with ſuch pomps and ceremonies; in ſhort, why they who had ſlain ſo many hecatombs at their altars, ſhould be leſs ſucceſsful than the Lacedæmonians, who fell ſo ſhort of them in all theſe particulars. To this, ſays he, the Oracle made the following reply: "I am better pleaſed with the prayer of the Lacedæmonians than with all the oblations of the Greeks." As this prayer implied and encouraged virtue in thoſe who made it, the Philoſopher proceeds to ſhew how the moſt vicious man might be devout, ſo far as victims could make him, but that his offerings were regarded by the gods as bribes, and his petitions as blaſphemies. He likewiſe quotes on this occaſion two verſes out of Homer, in which the poet ſays, that the ſcent of the Trojan ſacrifices was carried up to heaven by the winds; but that it was not acceptable to the gods, who were diſpleaſed with Priam and all his people.

The concluſion of this dialogue is very remarkable. Socrates having deterred Alcibiades from the prayers and ſacrifice which he was going to offer, by ſetting forth the above-mentioned difficulties of performing that duty

as he ought, adds these words. We must, therefore, wait till such time, as we may learn how we ought to behave ourselves towards the gods and towards men. But when will that time come, says Alcibiades, and who is it will instruct us? for I would fain see this man, whoever he is. It is one, says Socrates, who takes care of you; but as Homer tells us, that Minerva removed the mist from Diomede's eyes, that he might plainly discover both gods and men; so the darkness that hangs upon your mind must be removed, before you are able to discern what is good and what is evil.—"Let him remove from my mind, says Alcibiades, the darkness, and what else he pleases; I am determined to refuse nothing he shall order me, whoever he is, so that I may become the better man by it."—The remaining part of this dialogue is very obscure: There is something in it that would make us think Socrates hinted at himself, when he spoke of this Divine Teacher who was to come into the world, did he not own that he himself was in this respect as much at a loss, and in as great distress, as the rest of mankind.

Some learned men look upon this conclusion as a prediction of our Saviour, or at least that Socrates, like the high-priest, prophesied unknowingly, and pointed at that Divine Teacher who was to come into the world some ages after him. However that may be, we find that this great philosopher saw, by the light of reason, that it was suitable to the goodness of the Divine Nature, to send a person into the world who should instruct mankind in the duties of religion, and, in particular, teach them how to pray.

Whoever reads this abstract of Plato's Discourse on Prayer, will, I believe, naturally make this reflection, that the great Founder of our religion, as well by his own example, as in the form of prayer which he taught his disciples, did not only keep up to those rules which the light of nature had suggested to this great Philhsopher, but instructed his disciples in the whole extent of this duty, as well as of all others. He directed them to the proper object of adoration, and taught them, according

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to the third rule above mentioned, to apply themſelves to him in their cloſets, without ſhow or oſtentation; and to worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth. As the Lacedæmonians, in their form of prayer, implored the gods in general to give them all good things ſo long as they were virtuous, we aſk in particular that our offences may be forgiven as we forgive thoſe of others. If we look into the ſecond rule which Socrates has preſcribed, namely, that we ſhould apply ourſelves to the knowledge of ſuch things as are beſt for us, this too is explained at large in the doctrines of the goſpel, where we are taught in ſeveral inſtances to regard thoſe things as curſes, which appear as bleſſings in the eye of the world; and on the contrary, to eſteem thoſe things as bleſſings, which to the generality of mankind appear as curſes. Thus, in the form which is preſcribed to us we only pray for that happineſs which is our chief good, and the great end of our exiſtence, when we petition the Supreme Being for the coming of his kingdom, being ſolicitous for no other temporal bleſſing but our daily ſuſtenance. On the other ſide, we pray againſt nothing but ſin, and againſt evil in general, leaving it with Omniſcience to determine what is really ſuch. If we look into the firſt of Socrates's rules of prayer, in which he recommends the above-mentioned form of the ancient poet, we find that form not only comprehended, but very much improved in the petition, wherein we pray to the Supreme Being that his will may be done: which is of the ſame force with that form which our Saviour uſed, when he prayed againſt the moſt painful and moſt ignominious of deaths, 'Nevertheleſs not my will, but thine be done.'—This comprehenſive petition is the moſt humble, as well as the moſt prudent, that can be offered up from the creature to his Creator, as it ſuppoſes the Supreme Being wills nothing but what is for our good, and that he knows better than ourſelves what is ſo. L.

SECTION V.

Advantage of Revelation above Natural Reaſon.

------quicquid dignum ſapiente bonoque eſt. Hor.

RELIGION may be conſidered under two general heads. The firſt comprehends what we are to believe, the other what we are to practiſe. By thoſe things which we are to believe, I mean whatever is revealed to us in the Holy Writings, and which we could not have obtained the knowledge of by the light of nature; by the things which we are to practiſe, I mean all thoſe duties to which we are directed by reaſon, or natural religion. The firſt of theſe I ſhall diſtinguiſh by the name of Faith, the ſecond by that of Morality.

If we look into the more ſerious part of mankind, we find many who lay ſo great a ſtreſs upon Faith, that they neglect Morality; and many who build ſo much upon Morality, that they do not pay a due regard to Faith. The perfect man ſhould be defective in neither of theſe particulars, as will be very evident to thoſe who conſider the benefits which ariſe from each of them, and which I ſhall make the ſubject of this day's paper.

Notwithſtanding this general diviſion of Chriſtian Duty into Morality and Faith, and that they have both their peculiar excellencies, the firſt has the pre-eminence in ſeveral reſpects.

Firſt, Becauſe the greateſt part of Morality (as I have ſtated the notion of it) is of a fixed, eternal nature, and will endure when Faith ſhall fail, and be loſt in conviction.

Secondly, Becauſe a perſon may be qualified to do greater good to mankind, and become more beneficial to the world, by Morality without Faith, than by Faith without Morality.

Thirdly, Becauſe Morality gives a greater perfection to human nature, by quieting the mind, moderating the paſſions, and, advancing the happineſs of every man in his private capacity.

Fourthly, Becauſe the rule of Morality is much more certain than that of Faith, all the civilized nations of the world

world agreeing in the great points of Morality, as much as they differ in thoſe of Faith.

Fifthly, Becauſe Infidelity is not of ſo malignant a nature as Immorality; or to put the ſame reaſon in another light, becauſe it is generally owned, there may be ſalvation for a virtuous infidel, (particularly in the caſe of inviſicible ignorance) but none for a vicious believer.

Sixthly, Becauſe Faith ſeems to draw its principal, if not all its excellency, from the influence it has upon Morality; as we ſhall ſee more at large, if we conſider wherein conſiſts the excellency of Faith, or the belief of revealed religion; and this I think is,

Firſt, in explaining, and carrying to greater heights, ſeveral points of Morality.

Secondly, In furniſhing new and ſtronger motives to enforce the practice of Morality.

Thirdly, In giving us more amiable ideas of the Supreme Being, more endearing notions of one another, and a true ſtate of ourſelves, both in regard to the grandeur and vileneſs of our natures,

Fourthly, By ſhewing us the blackneſs and deformity of vice, which in the chriſtian ſyſtem is ſo very great, that he who is poſſeſſed of all perfection, and the Sovereign Judge of it, is repreſented by ſeveral of our Divines as hating ſin to the ſame degree that he loves the Sacred Perſon who was made the propitiation of it.

Fifthly, In being the ordinary and preſcribed method of making Morality effectual to ſalvation.

I have only touched on theſe ſeveral heads, which every one who is converſant in diſcourſes of this nature will eaſily enlarge upon in his own thoughts, and draw concluſions from them which may be uſeful to him in the conduct of his life. One I am ſure is ſo obvious, that he cannot miſs it, namely, that a man cannot be perfect in his ſcheme of Morality, who does not ſtrengthen and ſupport it with that of the Chriſtian Faith.

Beſides this, I ſhall lay down two or three other maxims which I think we may deduce from what has been ſaid.

Firſt, That we ſhould be particularly cautious of making

making any thing an article of Faith, which does not contribute to the confirmation or improvement of Morality.

Secondly, That no article of Faith can be true and authentic, which weakens or ſubverts the practical part of religion, or what I have hitherto called Morality.

Thirdly, That the greateſt friend of Morality, or natural religion, cannot poſſibly apprehend any danger from embracing chriſtianity, as it is preſerved pure and uncorrupt in the doctrines of our national church.

There is likewiſe another maxim which I think may be drawn from the foregoing conſiderations, which is this, that we ſhould in all dubious points, conſider any ill conſequences that may ariſe from them, ſuppoſing they ſhould be erroneous, before we give up our aſſent to them.

For example, in that diſputable point of perſecuting men for conſcience ſake, beſides the imbittering their minds with hatred, indignation, and all the vehemence of reſentment, and inſnaring them to profeſs what they do not believe; we cut them off from the pleaſures and advantages of ſociety, afflict their bodies, diſtreſs their fortunes, hurt their reputation, ruin their families, make their lives painful, or put an end to them. Sure when I ſee ſuch dreadful conſequences ariſing from a principle, I would be as fully convinced of the truth of it, as of a mathematical demonſtration, before I would venture to act upon it, or make it a part of my religion.

In this caſe the injury done our neighbour is plain and evident, the principle that puts us upon doing it, of a dubious and diſputable nature. Morality ſeems highly violated by the one, and whether or no a zeal for what a man thinks the true ſyſtem of faith may juſtify it, is very uncertain. I cannot but think, if our religion produce charity as well as zeal, it will not be for ſhewing itſelf by ſuch cruel inſtances. But, to conclude with the words of an excellent author, "We have juſt enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another.

Ὁ ἐλαχίστων δεόμενος ἐγγίστα Θεῶν.

Socrates apud Xen.

IT was the common boaſt of the heathen philoſophers, that by the efficacy of their ſeveral doctrines, they made human nature reſemble the divine. How much miſtaken ſoever they might be in the ſeveral means they propoſed for this end, it muſt be owned that the deſign was great and glorious. The fineſt works of invention and imagination, are of very little weight, when put in the balance with what refines and exalts the rational mind. Longinus excuſes Homer very handſomely, when he ſays the poet made his gods like men, that he might make his men appear like the gods: but it muſt be allowed that ſeveral of the ancient philoſophers acted, as Cicero wiſhes Homer had done; they endeavoured rather to make men like gods, than gods like men.

According to this general maxim in philoſophy, ſome of them have endeavoured to place men in ſuch a ſtate of pleaſure, or indolence at leaſt, as they vainly imagined the happineſs of the Supreme Being to conſiſt in. On the other hand, the moſt virtuous ſect of philoſophers have created a chimerical wiſe man, whom they made exempt from paſſion and pain, and thought it enough to pronounce him all-ſufficient.

This laſt character, when diveſted of the glare of human philoſophy that ſurrounds it, ſignifies no more, than that a good and wiſe man ſhould ſo arm himſelf with patience, as not to yield tamely to the violence of paſſion and pain; that he ſhould learn ſo to ſuppreſs and contract his deſires as to have few wants; and that he ſhould cheriſh ſo many virtues in his ſoul, as to have a perpetual ſource of pleaſure in himſelf.

The Chriſtian religion requires, that, after having framed the beſt idea we are able of the Divine Nature, it ſhould be our next care to conform ourſelves to it, as far as our imperfections will permit. I might mention ſeveral paſſages in the Sacred Writings on this head, to which I might add many maxims and wiſe ſayings of moral authors among the Greeks and Romans.

I ſhall

I ſhall only inſtance a remarkable paſſage, to this purpoſe, out of Julian's Cæſars. The emperor having repreſented all the Roman emperors with Alexander the Great, as paſſing in review before the gods, and ſtriving for the ſuperiority, lets them all drop, excepting Alexander, Julius Cæſar, Auguſtus Cæſar, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and Conſtantine. Each of theſe heroes of antiquity lays in his claim for the upper place; and, in order to it, ſets forth his actions after the moſt advantageous manner. But the gods, inſtead of being dazzled with the luſtre of their actions, enquire, by Mercury, into the proper motive and governing principle that influenced them throughout the whole ſeries of their lives and exploits. Alexander tells them, that his aim was to conquer: Julius Cæſar, that it was to gain the higheſt poſt in his country; Auguſtus, to govern well; Trajan, that he was the ſame as Alexander, namely, to conquer. The queſtion, at length, was put to Marcus Aurelius, who replied, with great modeſty, that it had always been his care to imitate the gods. This conduct ſeems to have gained him the moſt votes and beſt place in the whole aſſembly. Marcus Aurelius being afterwards aſked to explain himſelf, declares, that, by imitating the gods, he endeavoured to imitate them in the uſe of his underſtanding, and of all other faculties: and, in particular, that it was always his ſtudy to have as few wants as poſſible in himſelf, and to do all the good he could to others.

Among the many methods by which revealed religion has advanced morality, this is one, that it has given us a more juſt and perfect idea of that Being whom every reaſonable creature ought to imitate. The young man, in a heathen comedy, might juſtify his lewdneſs, by the example of Jupiter; as, indeed, there was ſcarce any crime that might not be countenanced by thoſe notions of the deity, which prevailed among the common people in the heathen world. Revealed religion, ſets forth a proper object for imitation, in that Being, who is the pattern, as well as the ſource, of all ſpiritual perfection.

While

While we remain in this life, we are ſubject to innumerable temptations, which, if liſtened to, will make us deviate from reaſon and goodneſs, the only things wherein we can imitate the Supreme Being. In the next life, we meet with nothing to excite our inclinations, that doth not deſerve them. I ſhall therefore diſmiſs my reader with this maxim, viz. Our happineſs in this world, proceeds from the ſuppreſſion of our deſires; but, in the next world, from the gratification of them.

--------quis enim virtutem amplectitur ipſam,
Præmia ſi tollas? Juv.

IT is uſual with polemical writers to object ill deſigns to their adverſaries. This turns their argument into ſatire, which inſtead of ſhewing an error in the underſtanding, tends only to expoſe the morals of thoſe they write againſt. I ſhall not act after this manner with reſpect to the freethinkers. Virtue and the happineſs of ſociety, are the great ends which all men ought to promote, and ſome of that ſect would be thought to have at heart above the reſt of mankind. But ſuppoſing thoſe who make that profeſſion to carry on a good deſign in the ſimplicity of their hearts, and according to their beſt knowledge, yet it is much to be feared, thoſe well-meaning ſouls, while they endeavoured to recommend virtue, have in reality been advancing the intereſt of vice, which, as I take to proceed from their ignorance of human nature, we may hope, when they become ſenſible of their miſtake, they will, in conſequence of that beneficent principle they pretend to act upon, reform their practice for the future.

The ſages, whom I have in my eye, ſpeak of virtue as the moſt amiable thing in the world; but at the ſame time that they extol her beauty, they take care to leſſen her portion. Such innocent creatures are they, and ſo great ſtrangers to the world, that they think this a likely method to increaſe the number of her admirers.

Virtue has in herſelf the moſt engaging charms; and chriſtianity, as it places her in the ſtrongeſt light, and

adorned

adorned with all her native attractions, ſo it kindles a new fire in the ſoul, by adding to them the unutterable rewards which attend her votaries in an eternal ſtate. Or if there are men of a ſaturnine and heavy complexion, who are not eaſy lifted up by hope, there is the proſpect of everlaſting puniſhment, to agitate their ſouls, and to frighten them into the practice of virtue, and an averſion from vice.

Whereas your ſober freethinkers tell you, that virtue indeed is beautiful, and vice deformed: the former deſerves your love, and the latter your abhorrence; but then, it is for their own ſake, or on account of the good and evils which immediately attend them, and are inſeparable from their reſpective natures. As for the immortality of the ſoul, or eternal puniſhments and rewards, thoſe are openly ridiculed, or rendered ſuſpicious by the moſt ſly and laboured artifice.

I will not ſay, theſe men act treacherouſly or in the cauſe of virtue; but, will any one deny, that they act foolithly, who pretend to advance the intereſt of it by deſtroying or weakening the ſtrongeſt motives to it, which are accommodated to all capacities, and fitted to work on all diſpoſitions, and enforcing thoſe alone which can effect only a generous and exalted mind?

Surely they muſt be deſtitute of paſſion themſelves, and unacquainted with the force it hath on the minds of others, who can imagine that the mere beauty of fortitude, temperance and juſtice, is ſufficient to ſuſtain the mind of man in a ſevere courſe of ſelf-denial againſt all the temptations of preſent profit and ſenſuality.

It is my opinion, the freethinkers ſhould be treated as a ſet of poor ignorant creatures, that have not ſenſe to diſcover the excellency of religion; it being evident thoſe men are no witches, nor likely to be guilty of any deep deſign, who proclaim aloud to the world, that they have leſs motives of honeſty than the reſt of their fellow ſubjects; who have all the inducements to the exerciſe of any virtue which a freethinker can poſſibly have, and beſides, the expectation of never-ending happineſs

happineſs or miſery, as the conſequence of their choice.

Are not men actuated by their paſſions? and are not hope and fear the moſt powerful of our paſſions? and are there any objects which can rouſe and awaken our hopes and fears, like thoſe proſpects that warm and penetrate the heart of a chriſtian, but are not regarded by a free-thinker?

It is not only a clear point, that a chriſtian breaks through ſtronger engagements whenever he ſurrenders himſelf to commit a criminal action, and is ſtung with a ſharper remorſe after it, than a free-thinker; but it ſhould even ſeem that a man who believes no future ſtate, would act a fooliſh part in being thoroughly honeſt. For, what reaſon is there, why ſuch a one ſhould poſtpone his own private intereſt or pleaſure, to the doing his duty? If a chriſtian foregoes ſome preſent advantage for the ſake of his conſcience, he acts accountably, becauſe it is with the view of gaining ſome greater future good. But he that, having no ſuch view, ſhould yet conſcientiouſly deny himſelf a preſent good in any incident where he may ſave appearances, is altogether as ſtupid as he that would truſt him at ſuch a juncture.

It will perhaps be ſaid, that virtue is her own reward; that a natural gratification attends good actions, which is alone ſufficient to excite men to the performance of them. But although there is nothing more lovely than virtue, and the practice of it is the ſureſt way to ſolid natural happineſs, even in this life; yet titles, eſtates, and fantaſtical pleaſures, are more ardently ſought after by moſt men, than the natural gratifications of a reaſonable mind; and it cannot be denied, that virtue and innocence are not always the readieſt methods to attain that ſort of happineſs. Beſides, the fumes of paſſion muſt be allayed, and reaſon muſt burn brighter than ordinary, to enable men to ſee and reliſh all the native beauties and delights of a virtuous life. And though we ſhould grant our free-thinkers to be a

ſet of refined ſpirits, capable only of being enamoured of virtue, yet what would become of the bulk of mankind, who have groſs underſtandings, but lively ſenſes, and ſtrong paſſions? What a deluge of luſt, and fraud, and violence, would in a little time overflow the whole nation, if theſe wiſe advocates for morality were univerſally hearkened to! Laſtly, opportunities do ſometimes offer, in which a man may wickedly make his fortune, or indulge a pleaſure, without fear of temporal damage, either in reputation, health, or fortune. In ſuch caſes, what reſtraint do they lie under, who have no regards beyond the grave? the inward compunctions of a wicked, as well as the joys of an upright mind, being grafted on the ſenſe of another ſtate.

The thought, that our exiſtence terminates with this life, doth naturally check the ſoul in any generous purſuit, contract her views, and fix them on temporary and ſelfiſh ends. It dethrones the reaſon, extinguiſhes all noble and heroic ſentiments, and ſubjects the mind to the ſlavery of every preſent paſſion. The wiſe heathens of antiquity were not ignorant of this: hence they endeavoured by fables and conjectures, and the glimmerings of nature, to poſſeſs the minds of men, with the belief of a future ſtate, which has been ſince brought to light by the goſpel, and is now moſt inconſiſtently decried by a few weak men, who would have us believe that they promote virtue by turning religion into ridicule.

Mens agit at molem—— Virg.

TO one who regards things with a philoſophical eye, and hath a ſoul capable of being delighted with the ſenſe, that truth and knowledge prevail among men, it muſt be a grateful reflection, to think that the ſublimeſt truths, which among the heathens only, here and there one of brighter parts and more leiſure than ordinary could attain to, are now grown familiar to the meaneſt inhabitants of theſe nations.

Whence came this ſurpriſing change, that regions, formerly inhabited by ignorant and ſavage people, ſhould

now

how outſhine ancient Greece, and the other eaſtern countries, ſo renowned of old, in the moſt elevated notions of theology and morality? Is it the effect of our own parts and induſtry? Have our common mechanics more refined underſtandings than the ancient philoſophers? It is owing to the God of truth, who came down from heaven, and condeſcended to be himſelf our teacher. It is as we are chriſtians, that we profeſs more excellent and divine truths than the reſt of mankind.

If there be any of the freethinkers, who are not direct atheiſts, charity would incline one to believe them ignorant of what is here advanced. And it is for their information that I write this paper, the deſign of which is, to compare the ideas that chriſtians entertain of the being and attributes of a God, with the groſs notions of the heathen world. Is it poſſible for the mind of man, to conceive a more auguſt idea of the Deity, than is ſet forth in the holy ſcriptures? I ſhall throw together ſome paſſages relating to this ſubject, which I propoſe only as philoſophical ſentiments, to be conſidered by a freethinker.

'Though there be that are called gods, yet to us 'there is but one God. He made the heaven, and hea-'ven of heavens, with all their hoſts; the earth, and 'all things that are therein; the ſeas, and all that is 'therein. He ſaid, let them be, and it was ſo. He 'hath ſtretched forth the heavens. He hath founded 'the earth, and hung it upon nothing. He hath ſhut 'up the ſea with doors, and ſaid, hither ſhalt thou 'come and no further, and here ſhall thy proud waves 'be ſtayed. The Lord is an inviſible ſpirit, in whom 'we live, and move, and have our being. He is the 'fountain of life. He preſerveth man and beaſt. He 'giveth food to all fleſh. In his hand is the ſoul of 'every living thing, and the breath of all mankind, 'The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich. He bring-'eth low and lifteth up. He killeth and maketh alive. 'He woundeth and healeth. By him king's reign, and 'princes decree juſtice, and not a ſparrow falleth to the

'ground without him. All angels, authorities, and 'powers are ſubject to him. He appointeth the moon 'for ſeaſons, and the ſun knoweth his going down. 'He thundereth with his voice, and directeth it under 'the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of 'the earth. Fire and hail, ſnow and vapour, wind and 'ſtorm fulfil his word. The Lord is king for ever 'and ever, and his dominion is an everlaſting dominion. 'The earth and the heavens ſhall periſh, but thou, O 'Lord, remaineſt. They all ſhall wax old, as doth a 'garment, and as a veſture ſhalt thou fold them up, 'and they ſhall be changed; but thou art the ſame, and 'thy years ſhall have no end. God is perfect in know-'ledge: his underſtanding is infinite. He is the father 'of lights. He looketh to the ends of the earth, and 'ſeeth under the whole heaven. The Lord beholdeth 'all the children of men, from the place of his habita-'tion, and conſidereth all their works. He knoweth 'our down-ſitting and up-riſing. He compaſſeth our 'path, and counteth our ſteps. He is acquainted with 'all ways; and when we enter our cloſet, and ſhut our 'door, he ſeeth us. He knoweth the things that come 'into our mind, every one of them; and no thought 'can be withholden from him. The Lord is good to 'all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. 'He is a father of the fatherleſs, and a judge of the 'widow. He is the God of peace, the father of mer-'cies, and the God of all comfort and conſolation. 'The Lord is great, and we know him not: his great-'neſs is unſearchable. Who but he hath meaſured the 'waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the 'heavens with a ſpan; Thine, O Lord, is the great-'neſs, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, 'and the majeſty. Thou art very great, thou art 'cloathed with honour. Heaven is thy throne, and 'earth is thy footſtool.'

Can the mind of a philoſopher, riſe to a more juſt and magnificent, and at the ſame time, a more amiable idea of the Deity, than is here ſet forth in the ſtrongeſt images,

images, and moſt emphatical language? And yet this is the language of ſhepherds and fiſhermen. The illiterate Jews, and poor perſecuted chriſtians, retained theſe noble ſentiments, while the polite and powerful nations of the earth, were given up to that ſottiſh ſort of worſhip, of which the following elegant deſcription is extracted from one of the inſpired writers.

'Who hath formed a god, or molten an image, 'that is profitable for nothing? The ſmith with the 'tongs, both worketh in the coals and faſhioneth it 'with hammers, and worketh it with the ſtrength of 'his arms: yea he is hungry and his ſtrength faileth. 'He drinketh no water, and is faint. A man plant-'eth an aſh, and the rain doth nouriſh it. He burneth 'part thereof in the fire. He roaſteth roaſt. He 'warmeth himſelf. And the reſidue thereof he maketh 'a god. He falleth down unto it, and worſhippeth 'it, and prayeth unto it, and ſaith deliver me, for thou 'art my god. None conſidereth in his heart, I have 'burnt part of it in the fire, yea alſo, I have baked 'bread upon the coals thereof; I have roaſted fleſh and 'eaten it; and ſhall I make the reſidue thereof an abo-'mination? ſhall I fall down to the ſtock of a tree?'

In ſuch circumſtances as theſe, for a man to declare for freethinking, and diſengage himſelf from the yoke of idolatry, were doing honour to human nature, and a work well becoming the great aſſerters of reaſon. But in a church, where our adoration is directed to the Supreme Being, and (to ſay the leaſt) where is nothing either in the object or manner of worſhip, that contradicts the light of nature, there, under the pretence of freethinking, to rail at the religious inſtitutions of their country, ſheweth an undiſtinguiſhing genius that miſtakes oppoſition for freedom of thought. And, indeed, notwithſtanding the pretences of ſome few among our freethinkers, I can hardly think there are men ſo ſtupid and inconſiſtent with themſelves, as to have a ſerious regard for natural religion, and at the ſame time uſe their utmoſt endeavours to deſtroy the credit

of thoſe ſacred writings, which, as they have been the means of bringing theſe parts of the world to the knowledge of natural religion, ſo, in caſe they loſe their authority over the minds of men, we ſhould of courſe ſink into the ſame idolatry, which we ſee practiſed by other unenlightened nations.

If a perſon who exerts himſelf in the modern way of freethinking, be not a ſtupid idolater, it is undeniable, that he contributes all he can to the making other men ſo, either by ignorance or deſign; which lays him under the dilemma, I will not ſay of being a fool or a knave, but of incurring the contempt or deteſtation of mankind.

SECTION VI.

Excellency of the Chriſtian Inſtitution.

------Aptiſſima quæque dabunt Dii,
Charior eſt illis homo, quam ſibi------ JUV.

IT is owing to pride, and a ſecret affectation of a certain ſelf-exiſtence, that the nobleſt motive for action that ever was propoſed to man, is not acknowledged the glory and happineſs of their being. The heart is treacherous to itſelf, and we do not let our reflections go deep enough to receive religion as the moſt honourable incentive to good and worthy actions. It is our natural weakneſs, to flatter ourſelves into a belief, that if we ſearch into our inmoſt thoughts, we find ourſelves wholly diſintereſted, and diveſted of any views ariſing from ſelf-love and vain-glory. But, however, ſpirits of ſuperficial greatneſs may diſdain at firſt ſight to do any thing, but from a noble impulſe in themſelves, without any further regards in this or another being; upon ſtricter enquiry they will find, to act worthily, and expect to be rewarded only in another world, is as heroic a pitch of virtue, as human nature can arrive at. If the tenor of our actions have any other motive, than the deſire to be pleaſing in the eye of the Deity, it will neceſſarily follow, that we muſt be more than men, if we are not too much exalted in proſperity, and depreſſed in adverſity. But the chriſtian world has a leader, the contem-

contemplation of whose life and sufferings, must administer comfort in affliction, while the sense of his power and omnipotence must give them humiliation in prosperity.

It is owing to the forbidden and unlovely constraint with which men of low conceptions act, when they think they conform themselves to religion, as well as to the more odious conduct of hypocrites, that the word christian does not carry with it at first view, all that is great, worthy, friendly, generous, and heroic. The man who suspends his hope of the reward of worthy actions, till after death, who can bestow unseen, who can overlook hatred, do good to his slanderer, who can never be angry at his friend, never revengeful to his enemy, is certainly formed for the benefit of society: yet these are so far from heroic virtues, that they are but the ordinary duties of a christian.

When a man with a steady faith looks back on the great catastrophe of this day, with what bleeding emotions of heart, must he contemplate the life and sufferings of his deliverer? When his agonies occur to him, how will he weep to reflect, that he has often forgot them for the glance of a wanton, for the applause of a vain world, for an heap of fleeting past pleasures, which are at present aching sorrows?

How pleasing is the contemplation of the lowly steps our Almighty leader took in conducting us to his heavenly mansions? In plain and apt parable, similitude, and allegory, our great master enforced the doctrine of our salvation; but they of his acquaintance, instead of receiving what they could not oppose, were offended at the presumption of being wiser than they; they could not raise their little ideas above the consideration of him, in those circumstances familiar to them, or conceive that he who appeared not more terrible or pompous, should have any thing more exalted than themselves; he in that place, therefore, would not longer ineffectually exert a power which was incapable of conquering the prepossession of their narrow and mean conceptions.

Multitudes

Multitudes followed him, and brought him the dumb, the blind, the ſick, and maimed; whom, when their creator had touched, with a ſecond life, they ſaw, ſpoke, leaped, and ran. In affection to him, and admiration of his actions, the crowd could not leave him, but waited near him, till they were almoſt as faint and helpleſs as others they brought for ſuccour. He had compaſſion on them, and by a miracle ſupplied their neceſſities. Oh, the ecſtatic entertainment, when they could behold their food immediately increaſe to the diſtributor's hand, and ſee their God in perſon, feeding and refreſhing his creatures! Oh envied happineſs! But why do I ſay envied? as if our God did not ſtill preſide over our temperate meals, cheerful hours, and innocent converſations.

But though the ſacred ſtory is every where full of miracles not inferior to this, and though in the midſt of thoſe acts of divinity, he never gave the leaſt hint of a deſign, to become a ſecular prince, yet had not hitherto the apoſtles themſelves, any other hopes than of worldly power, preferment, riches, and pomp; for Peter, upon an accident of ambition among the apoſtles, hearing his maſter explain that his kingdom was not of this world, was ſo ſcandalized, that he whom he had ſo long followed, ſhould ſuffer ignominy, ſhame, and death, which he foretold, that he took him aſide and ſaid, 'be it 'far from thee, Lord, this ſhall not be unto thee:' For which he ſuffered a ſevere reprehenſion from his maſter, as having in his view, the glory of man rather than that of God.

The great change of things began to draw near, when the Lord of nature thought fit as a Saviour and Deliverer, to make his public entry into Jeruſalem, with more than the power and joy, but none of the oſtentation and pomp, of a triumph; he came humble, meek, and lowly: with an unfelt new extaſy, multitudes ſtrewed his way with garments and olive-branches, crying, with loud gladneſs and acclamation, 'Hoſanna 'to the ſon of David; bleſſed is he that cometh in the

'name

'name of the Lord!' At this great king's acceſſion to his throne, men were not ennobled, but ſaved; crimes were not remitted, but ſins forgiven; he did not beſtow medals, honours, favours, but health, joy, ſight, ſpeech. The firſt object the blind ever ſaw, was the author of ſight; while the lame ran before, and the dumb repeated the Hoſanna. Thus attended, he entered into his own houſe, the ſacred temple, and, by his divine authority, expelled traders and worldlings, that profaned it; and thus did he, for a time, uſe a great and deſpotic power, to let unbelievers underſtand, that it was not want of, but ſuperiority to, all worldly dominion, that made him not exert it. But is this then the Saviour? is this the Deliverer? Shall this obſcure Nazarene command Iſrael, and ſit on the throne of David? Their proud and diſdainful hearts, which were petrified with the love and pride of this world, were impregnable to the reception of ſo mean a benefactor, and were now enough exaſperated with benefits, to conſpire his death. Our Lord was ſenſible of their deſign, and prepared his diſciples for it, by recounting to them now more diſtinctly, what ſhould befal him; but Peter, with an ungrounded reſolution, and a fluſh of temper, made a ſanguine proteſtation, that though all men were offended in him, yet would not he be offended. It was a great article of our Saviour's buſineſs in the world, to bring us to a ſenſe of our inability, without God's aſſiſtance, to do any thing great or good; he therefore told Peter, who thought ſo well of his courage and fidelity, that they would both fail him, and even he ſhould deny him thrice that very night.

'But what heart can conceive, what tongue utter 'the ſequel? Who is that yonder buffeted, mocked, 'and ſpurned; Whom do they drag like a felon? 'Whither do they carry my Lord, my King, my Sa'viour, and my God? And will he die to expiate 'thoſe very injuries? See where they have nailed the 'Lord and Giver of Life! How his wounds blacken, 'his body writhes, and heart heaves with pity and

'with

'with agony! Oh Almighty ſufferer, look down, 'look down from thy triumphant infamy. Lo, he in-'clines his head to his ſacred boſom! Hark, he 'groans! ſee, he expires! The earth trembles, the 'temple rends, the rocks burſt, the dead ariſe. Which 'are the quick? Which are the dead? Sure nature, 'all nature is departing with her Creator.' T.

IF to inform the underſtanding, and regulate the will, is the moſt laſting and diffuſive benefit, there will not be found ſo uſeful and excellent an inſtitution, as that of the chriſtian prieſthood, which is now become the ſcorn of fools. That a numerous order of men ſhould be conſecrated to the ſtudy of the moſt ſublime and beneficial truths, with a deſign to propagate them, by their diſcourſes and writings, to inform their fellow-creatures of the being and attributes of their deity, to poſſeſs their minds with the ſenſe of a future ſtate, and not only to explain the nature of every virtue and moral duty, but likewiſe to perſuade mankind to the practice of them by the moſt powerful and engaging motives, is a thing ſo excellent and neceſſary to the well-being of the world, that no body but a modern freethinker, could have the forehead or folly to turn into ridicule.

The light in which theſe points ſhould be expoſed to the view of one who is prejudiced againſt the names, religion, church, prieſt, and the like, is to conſider the clergy as ſo many philoſophers, the churches as ſchools, and their ſermons as lectures, for the information and improvement of the audience. How would the heart of Socrates or Tully have rejoiced, had they lived in a nation where the law had made proviſion for philoſophers, to read lectures of morality and theology every ſeventh day, in ſeveral thouſands of ſchools, erected at the public charge, throughout the whole country, at which lectures all ranks and ſexes without diſtinction, were obliged to be preſent, for their general improvement? And what wicked wretches would they think

thoſe

thoſe men, who ſhould endeavour to defeat the purpoſe of ſo divine an inſtitution?

It is indeed uſual with that low tribe of writers, to pretend their deſign is only to reform the church, and expoſe the vices, and not the order of the clergy. The author of a pamphlet printed the other day, (which without my mentioning the title, will, on this occaſion, occur to the thoughts of thoſe who have read it) hopes to inſinuate by that artifice, what he is afraid or aſhamed, openly to maintain. But there are two points which clearly ſhew, what it is he aims at. The firſt is, that he conſtantly uſes the word prieſt in ſuch a manner, as that his reader cannot but obſerve, he means to throw an odium on the clergy of the church of England, from their being called by a name which they enjoy in common with heathens and impoſtors. The other is, his raking together and exaggerating, with great ſpleen and induſtry, all thoſe actions of churchmen, which, either by their own illneſs, or the bad light in which he places them, tend to give men an ill impreſſion of the diſpenſers of the goſpel: all which he pathetically addreſſes to the conſideration of his wiſe and honeſt countrymen of the laity. The ſophiſtry and ill-breeding of theſe proceedings are ſo obvious to men who have any pretence to that character, that I need ſay no more either of them or their author. Z.

SECTION VII.

Dignity of the Scripture Language.

Οι δε πανημεριοι μολπῃ Θεον ἱλασκοντο,
Καλον ἀειδοντες παιηονα κουροι Αχαιων,
Μελποντες Εκαεργον· ὁ δε φρενα τερπετ' ακουων.

HOM.

THERE is a certain coldneſs and indifference in the phraſes of our European languages, when they are compared with the original forms of ſpeech; and it happens very luckily, that the Hebrew idioms run into the Engliſh tongue, with a particular grace and beauty.

beauty. Our language has received immumerable elegancies and improvements, from that infuſion of Hebraiſms, which are derived to it out of the poetical paſſages in Holy Writ. They give a force and energy to our expreſſions, warm and animate our language, and convey our thoughts in more ardent and intenſe phraſes, than any that are to be met with in our own tongue. There is ſomething ſo pathetic in this kind of diction, that it often ſets the mind in a flame, and makes our hearts burn within us. How cold and dead does a prayer appear, that is compoſed in the moſt elegant and polite forms of ſpeech, which are natural to our tongue, when it is not heightened by that ſolemnity of phraſe, which may be drawn from the ſacred writings. It has been ſaid by ſome of the ancients, that if the gods were to talk with men, they would certainly talk in Plato's ſtyle; but I think we may ſay with juſtice, that when mortals converſe with their Creator, they cannot do it in ſo proper a ſtyle, as in that of the Holy Scriptures.

If any one would judge of the beauties of poetry, that are to be met with in the divine writings, and examine how kindly the Hebrew manners of ſpeech mix and incorporate with the Engliſh language; after having peruſed the book of pſalms, let him read a literal tranſlation of Horace or Pindar. He will find in theſe two laſt, ſuch an abſurdity and confuſion of ſtyle, with ſuch a comparative poverty of imagination, as will make him very ſenſible of what I have been here advancing.

Since we have therefore ſuch a treaſury of words, ſo beautiful in themſelves, and ſo proper for the airs of muſic, I cannot but wonder, that perſons of diſtinction ſhould give ſo little attention and encouragement to that kind of muſic, which would have its foundation in reaſon, and which would improve our virtue in proportion as it raiſed our delight. The paſſions that are excited by ordinary compoſitions, generally flow from ſuch ſilly and abſurd occaſions, that a man is aſhamed to reflect upon them ſeriouſly; but the fear, the love,

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the ſorrow, the indignation, that are awakened in the minds by hymns and anthems, make the heart better, and proceed from ſuch cauſes, as are altogether reaſonable and praiſe-worthy. Pleaſure and duty go hand in hand, and the greater our ſatisfaction is, the greater is our religion.

Muſic, among thoſe who were ſtyled the choſen people, was a religious art. The ſongs of Sion, which we have reaſon to believe, were in high repute among the courts of the eaſtern monarchs, were nothing elſe but pſalms and pieces of poetry, that adored and celebrated the Supreme Being. The greateſt conqueror in this holy nation, after the manner of the old Grecian lyrics, did not only compoſe the words of his divine odes, but generally ſet them to muſic himſelf: after which, his works, though they were conſecrated to the tabernacle, became the national entertainment, as well as the devotion of his people.

The firſt original of the drama, was a religious worſhip, conſiſting only of a chorus, which was nothing elſe but an hymn to a deity. As luxury and voluptuouſneſs prevailed over innocence and religion, this form of worſhip degenerated into tragedies; in which, however, the chorus ſo far remembered its firſt office, as to brand every thing that was vicious, and recommend every thing that was laudable; to intercede with heaven for the innocent, and to implore its vengeance on the criminal.

Homer and Heſiod intimate to us, how this art ſhould be applied, when they repreſent the muſes, as ſurrounding Jupiter, and warbling their hymns about his throne. I might ſhew from innumerable paſſages in ancient writers, not only that vocal and inſtrumental muſic were made uſe of in their religious worſhip, but that their moſt favourite diverſions, were filled with ſongs and hymns, to their reſpective deities. Had we frequent entertainments of this nature among us, they would not a little purify and exalt our paſſions, give our thoughts a proper turn, and cheriſh thoſe di-

vine impulſes in the ſoul, which every one feels that has not ſtifled them by ſenſual and immoderate pleaſures.

Muſic, when thus applied, raiſes noble hints in the minds of the hearer, and fills it with great conceptions. It ſtrengthens devotion, and advances praiſe into rapture. It lengthens out every act of worſhip, and produces more laſting and permanent impreſſions in the mind, than thoſe which accompany any tranſient form of words that are united in the ordinary method of religious worſhip. O.

---------Fungar inani
Munere-------- VIRG.

DR. Tillotſon, in his diſcourſe concerning 'the 'danger of all known ſin, both from the light of 'nature and revelation,' after having given us the deſcription of the laſt day, out of Holy Writ, has this remarkable paſſage.

'I appeal to any man, whether this be not a repre-'ſentation of things very proper and ſuitable to that 'great day, wherein he who made the world, ſhall 'come to judge it? And whether the wit of man ever 'deviſed any thing ſo awful, and ſo agreeable to the 'majeſty of God, and the ſolemn judgment of the 'whole world? The deſcription which Virgil makes of 'the Elyſian Fields, and the Infernal Regions, how 'infinitely do they fall ſhort of the majeſty of the 'Holy Scripture, and the deſcription there made of 'heaven and hell, and of "the great and terrible day "of the Lord!" So that in compariſon they are child-'iſh and trifling; and yet, perhaps, he had the moſt 'regular and moſt governed imagination of any man 'that ever lived, and obſerved the greateſt decorum in 'his characters and deſcriptions. But who can declare "the great things of God, but he to whom God ſhall "reveal them?"

This obſervation was worthy a moſt polite man, and ought to be of authority with all who are ſuch, ſo far as to examine, whether he ſpoke that as a man of a juſt

juſt taſte and judgment, or advanced it merely for the ſervice of his doctrine as a clergyman.

I am very confident, whoever reads the Golpels with an heart as much prepared in favour of them, as when he ſits down to Virgil or Homer, will find no paſſage there, which is not told with more natural force than any epiſode in either of thoſe wits, who were the chief of mere mankind.

The laſt thing I read was the 24th chapter of St. Luke, which gives an account of the manner in which our bleſſed Saviour, after his reſurrection, joined with two diſciples on the way to Emmaus, as an ordinary traveller, and took the privilege, as ſuch, to enquire of them, what occaſioned a ſadneſs he obſerved in their countenances; or whether it was from any public cauſe: their wonder that any man ſo near Jeruſalem, ſhould be a ſtranger to what had paſſed there; their acknowledgement to one they met accidentally, that they had believed in this prophet; and that now, the third day after his death, they were in doubt as to their pleaſing hope, which occaſioned the heavineſs he took notice of, are all repreſented in a ſtyle, which men of letters call 'the great and noble ſimplicity.'

The attention of the Diſciples, when he expounded the Scriptures, concerning himſelf, his offering to take his leave of them, their fondneſs of his ſtay, and the manifeſtation of the great gueſt whom they had entertained, while he was yet at meat with them, are all incidents which wonderfully pleaſe the imagination of a chriſtian reader; and give to him, ſomething of that touch of mind which the brethren felt, when they ſaid one to another, 'did not our hearts burn within us, 'while he talked with us by the way, and while he 'opened to us the Scriptures?'

I am very far from pretending to treat theſe matters as they deſerve; but I hope thoſe gentlemen who are qualified for it, and called to it, will forgive me, and conſider that I ſpeak as a mere ſecular man, impartially conſidering the effects which the Sacred

Writings will have upon the ſoul of an intelligent reader; and it is ſome argument, that a thing is the immediate work of God, when it ſo infinitely tranſcends all the labours of man. When I look upon Raphael's picture of our Saviour's appearing to his Diſciples after their reſurrection, I cannot but think the juſt diſpoſition of that piece, has in it the force of many volumes on the ſubject: the Evangeliſts are eaſily diſtinguiſhed from the reſt, by a paſſionate zeal and love, which the painter has thrown in their faces; the huddled group of thoſe who ſtand moſt diſtant, are admirable repreſentations of men, abaſhed with their late unbelief, and hardneſs of heart. And ſuch endeavours as this of Raphael, and of all men not called to the altar, are collateral helps not to be deſpiſed by the miniſters of the Goſpel.

It is with this view that I preſume upon ſubjects of this kind, and men may take up this paper, and be catched by an admonition, under the diſguiſe of a diverſion.

All the arts and ſciences ought to be employed in one confederacy againſt the prevailing torrent of vice and impiety; and it will be no ſmall ſtep in the progreſs of religion, if it is as evident as it ought to be, that he wants the beſt taſte and beſt ſenſe a man can have, who is cold to the 'beauty of holineſs.'

As for my part, when I have happened to attend the corpſe of a friend to his interment, and have ſeen a graceful man at the entrance of a church-yard, who becomes the dignity of his function, and aſſumed an authority which is natural to truth, pronounce 'I am the reſurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though 'he were dead, yet ſhall he live; and whoſoever liveth, 'and believeth in me, ſhall never die:' I ſay, upon ſuch an occaſion, the retroſpect upon paſt actions between the deceaſed, whom I followed, and myſelf, together with the many little circumſtances that ſtrike upon my ſoul, and alternately give grief and conſolation, have vaniſhed like a dream; and I have been relieved as by

a voice

a voice from heaven, when the ſolemnity has proceeded, and after a long pauſe, I have heard the ſervant of God utter, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he 'ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth; and though 'worms deſtory this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee 'God; whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and my eyes ſhall 'behold, and not another.' How have I been raiſed above this world, and all its regards, and how well prepared to receive the next ſentence which the holy man has ſpoken, 'We brought nothing into this world, and 'it is certain we can carry nothing out; the Lord gave, 'and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of 'the Lord!'

There are, I know, men of heavy temper, without genius, who can read theſe expreſſions of Scripture with as much indifference as they do the reſt of theſe looſe papers; however, I will not deſpair, but to bring men of wit into a love and admiration of Sacred Writings; and, as old as I am, I promiſe myſelf to ſee the day when it ſhall be as much the faſhion amongſt men of politeneſs to admire a rapture of St. Paul, as any fine expreſſion in Virgil or Horace; and to ſee a well-dreſſed young man produce an Evangeliſt out of his pocket, and be no more out of countenance than if it were a Claſſic printed by Elzever.

It is a gratitude that ought to be paid to providence, by men of diſtinguiſhed faculties, to praiſe and adore the Author of their Being with a ſpirit ſuitable to thoſe faculties, and rouſe ſlower men by their words, actions, and writings, to a participation of their tranſports and thankſgivings.

SECTION VIII.

Againſt Atheiſm and Infidelity.

AETER having treated of falſe Zealots in Religion, I cannot forbear mentioning a monſtrous ſpecies of men, who one would not think had any exiſtence in nature, were they not to be met with in ordinary converſation, I mean the Zealots in Atheiſm. One would fancy that theſe men, though they fall ſhort, in every

other reſpect, of thoſe who make a profeſſion of religion, would at leaſt outſhine them in this particular, and be exempt from that ſingle fault which ſeems to grow out of the imprudent fervours of religion: but ſo it is, that Infidelity is propagated with as much fierceneſs and contention, wrath and indignation, as if the ſafety of mankind depended upon it. There is ſomething ſo ridiculous and perverſe in this kind of zealots, that one does not know how to ſet them out in their proper colours. They are a ſort of gameſters, who are eternally upon the fret, though they play for nothing. They are perpetually teazing their friends to come over to them, though at the ſame time they allow that neither of them ſhall get any thing by the bargain. In ſhort the zeal of ſpreading Atheiſm is, if poſſible, more abſurd than Atheiſm itſelf.

Since I have mentioned this unaccountable zeal which appears in Atheiſts and Infidels, I muſt farther obſerve that they are likewiſe, in a moſt particular manner, poſſeſſed with the ſpirit of bigotry. They are wedded to opinions full of contradiction and impoſſibility, and at the ſame time look upon the ſmalleſt difficulty in an article of faith as a ſufficient reaſon for rejecting it. Notions that fall in with the common reaſon of mankind, that are conformable to the ſenſe of all ages and all nations, not to mention their tendency for promoting the happineſs of ſocieties or of particular perſons, are exploded as errors and prejudices; and ſchemes erected in their ſtead that are altogether monſtrous and irrational, and require the moſt extravagant credulity to embrace them. I would fain aſk one of theſe bigotted Infidels, ſuppoſing all the great points of Atheiſm, as the caſual or eternal formation of the world, the materiality of a thinking ſubſtance, the morality of the ſoul, the fortuitous organization of the body, the motions and gravitation of matter, with the like particulars, were laid together and formed into a kind of creed, according to the opinions of the moſt celebrated Atheiſts; I ſay, ſuppoſing ſuch a creed as this were formed, and impoſed upon

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any one people in the world, whether it would not require an infinitely greater meaſure of faith, than any ſet of articles which they ſo violently oppoſe. Let me therefore adviſe this generation of wranglers, for their own and for the public good, to act at leaſt ſo conſiſtently with themſelves, as not to burn with Zeal for Irreligion, and with Bigotry for Nonſenſe. O.

Cœlum ipſum petimus ſtultitia--- HOR.

UPON my return to my lodgings laſt night, I found a letter from my worthy friend the clergyman, whom I have given ſome account of in my former papers. He tells me in it, that he was particularly pleaſed with the latter part of my yeſterday's ſpeculation; and at the ſame time incloſed the following Eſſay, which he deſires me to publiſh as the ſequel of that diſcourſe. It conſiſts partly of uncommon reflections, and partly of ſuch as have been already uſed, but now ſet in a ſtronger light.

'A believer may be excuſed by the moſt hardened 'atheiſt for endeavouring to make him a convert, be'cauſe he does it with an eye to both their intereſts. The 'atheiſt is inexcuſable who tries to gain over a believer, 'becauſe he does not propoſe the doing himſelf or be'liever any good by ſuch a converſion.

'The proſpect of a future ſtate is the ſecret comfort 'and refreſhment of my ſoul, it is that which makes na'ture look gay about me; it doubles all my pleaſures, 'and ſupports me under all my afflictions. I can look 'at diſappointments and misfortunes, pain and ſickneſs, 'death itſelf, and, what is worſe than death, the loſs of 'thoſe who are deareſt to me, with indifference, ſo long as 'I keep in view the pleaſures of eternity, and the ſtate 'of being in which there will be no fears nor apprehen'ſions, pains nor ſorrows, ſickneſs nor ſeparation. Why 'will any man be ſo impertinently officious, as to tell 'me all this is only fancy and deluſion? Is there any 'merit in being the meſſenger of ill news? If it is a 'dream, let me enjoy it, ſince it makes me both the hap'pier and the better man. 'I muſt

'I must confess I do not know how to trust a man who 'believes neither heaven nor hell, or in other words, a 'future state of rewards and punishments. Not only 'natural self-love, but reason, directs us to promote our 'own interest above all things. It can never be for the 'interest of a believer to do me a mischief, because he is 'sure, upon the balance of accompts, to find himself a 'loser by it. On the contrary, if he considers his own 'welfare in his behaviour towards me, it will lead him 'to do me all the good he can, and, at the same time, 'restrain him from doing me an injury. An unbeliever 'does not act like a reasonable creature, if he favours me 'contrary to his present interest, or does not distress me 'when it turns to his present advantage. Honour and 'good-nature may, indeed, tie up his hands; but as these 'would be very much strengthened by reason and prin-'ciple, so without them they are only instincts, or wa-'vering unsettled notions, which rest on no foundation.

'Infidelity has been attacked with so good success of 'late years, that it is driven out of all its out-works. 'The atheist has not found his post tenable, and is 'therefore retired into deism, and a disbelief of revealed 'religion only. But the truth of it is, the greatest 'number of this set of men, are those who, for want of 'a virtuous education, or examining the grounds of re-'ligion, know so very little of the matter in question, 'that their infidelity is but another term for their ig-'norance.

'As folly and inconsiderateness are the foundations of 'infidelity, the great pillars and support of it are either 'a vanity of appearing wiser than the rest of mankind, 'or an ostentation of courage in despising the terrors of 'another world, which have so great an influence on what 'they call weaker minds; or an aversion to a belief that 'must cut them off from many of those pleasures they 'propose to themselves, and fill them with remorse for 'many of those they have already tasted.

'The great received articles of the christian religion 'have been so clearly proved, from the authority of that

'Divine

'Divine Revelation in which they are delivered, that it 'is impoſſible for thoſe who have ears to hear and eyes 'to ſee, not to be convinced of them. But were it poſ-'ſible for any thing in the chriſtian faith to be erroneous; 'I can find no ill conſequences in adhering to it. The 'great points of the incarnation and ſufferings of our 'Saviour, produce naturally ſuch habits of virtue in the 'mind of man, that, I ſay, ſuppoſing it were poſſible for 'us to be miſtaken in them, the infidel himſelf muſt, at 'leaſt, allow that no other ſyſtem of religion could ſo ef-'fectually contribute to the heightening of morality. 'They give us great ideas of the dignity of human na-'ture, and of the love which the Supreme Being bears to 'his creatures, and conſequently engage us in the high-'eſt acts of our duty towards our Creator, our neighbour, 'and ourſelves. How many noble arguments has Saint 'Paul raiſed from the chief articles of our religion, for 'the advancing of morality in its three great branches? 'To give a ſingle example in each kind: What can be 'a ſtronger motive to a firm truſt and reliance on the 'mercies of our Maker, than the giving us his Son to 'ſuffer for us? What can make us love and eſteem even 'the moſt inconſiderable of mankind, more than the 'thought that Chriſt died for him? Or what diſpoſe us 'to ſet a ſtricter guard upon the purity of our own 'hearts, than our being members of Chriſt, and a part 'of the ſociety of which that immaculate Perſon is the 'Head? But theſe are only a ſpecimen of thoſe admira-'ble enforcements of morality, which the apoſtle has 'drawn from the hiſtory of our Bleſſed Saviour.

'If our modern infidels conſidered theſe matters with 'that candour and ſerioufneſs which they deſerve, we 'ſhould not ſee them act with ſuch a ſpirit of bitterneſs, 'arrogance, and malice; they would not be raiſing ſuch 'inſignificant cavils, doubts, and ſcruples, as may be 'ſtarted againſt every thing that is not capable of ma-'thematical demonſtration; in order to unſettle the 'minds of the ignorant, diſturb the public peace, ſub-'vert morality, and throw all things into confuſion and

'diſorder.

'diſorder. If none of theſe reflections can have any in-
'fluence on them, there is one that perhaps may, be-
'cauſe it is adapted to their vanity, by which they ſeem
'to be guided much more than their reaſon. I would,
'therefore, have them conſider that the wiſeſt and beſt
'of men, in all ages of the world, have been thoſe who
'lived up to the religion of their country, when they
'ſaw nothing in it oppoſite to morality and to the beſt
'lights they had of the Divine Nature. Pythagoras's
'firſt rule directs us to worſhip the gods, "as it is or-
"dained by law," for that is the moſt natural interpre-
'tation of the precept. Socrates, who was the moſt re-
'nowned among the heathens, both for wiſdom and vir-
'tue, in his laſt moments deſires his friends to offer a cock
'to Æſculapius; doubtleſs out of a ſubmiſſive deference
'to the eſtabliſhed worſhip of his country. Xenophon
'tells us, that his prince, (whom he ſets forth as a pat-
'tern of perfection) when he found his death approach-
'ing, offered ſacrifices on the mountains to the Perſian
'Jupiter, and the Sun, "according to the cuſtom of
"the Perſians;" for thoſe are the words of the hiſtorian.
'Nay, the Epicureans and atomical philoſophers ſhewed
'a very remarkable modeſty in this particular; for,
'though the Being of a God was entirely repugnant to
'their ſchemes of natural philoſophy, they contented
'themſelves with the denial of a providence, aſſerting, at
'the ſame time, the exiſtence of gods in general; be-
'cauſe they would not ſhock the common belief of man-
'kind, and the religion of their country.' L.

Quæ ratione queas traducere leniter ævum:
Ne te ſemper inops agitet vexetque cupido;
Ne pavor & rerum mediocriter utilium Spes. HOR.

HAVING endeavoured, in my laſt Saturday's paper, to ſhew the great excellency of faith, I ſhall here conſider what are the proper means of ſtrengthening and confirming it in the mind of man. Thoſe who delight in reading books of controverſy, which are written on both ſides of the queſtion in points of faith, do very ſeldom arrive at a fixed and ſettled habit of it; they are one day entirely convinced of its important truths, and the next

meet

meet with ſomething that ſhakes and diſturbs them. The doubt which was laid revives again, and ſhews itſelf in new difficulties, and that generally for this reaſon, becauſe the mind, which is perpetually toſſed in controverſies and diſputes, is apt to forget the reaſons which had once ſet it at reſt, and to be diſquieted with any former perplexity, when it appears in a new ſhape, or is ſtarted by a different hand. As nothing is more laudable than an inquiry after truth, ſo nothing is more irrational than to paſs away our whole lives, without determining ourſelves one way or other in thoſe points which are of the laſt importance to us. There are indeed many things from which we may withhold our aſſent; but in caſes by which we are to regulate our lives, it is the greateſt abſurdity to be wavering and unſettled, without cloſing with that ſide which appears the moſt ſafe, and the moſt probable.

The firſt rule, therefore, which I ſhall lay down is this: that when by reading or diſcourſe we find ourſelves thoroughly convinced of the truth of any article, and of the reaſonableneſs of our belief in it, we ſhould never after ſuffer ourſelves to call it into queſtion. We may, perhaps, forget the arguments which occaſioned our conviction, but we ought to remember the ſtrength they had with us, and therefore ſtill to retain the conviction which they once produced. This is no more than what we do in every common art or ſcience, nor is it poſſible to act otherwiſe, conſidering the weakneſs and limitation of our intellectual faculties. It was thus that Latimer, one of the glorious army of martyrs, who introduced the reformation in England, behaved himſelf in that great conference which was managed between the moſt learned among the Proteſtants and Papiſts in the reign of Queen Mary. This venerable old man knowing how his abilities were impaired by age, and that it was impoſſible for him to recollect all thoſe reaſons which had directed him in the choice of his religion, left his companions, who were in the full poſſeſſion of their parts and learning, to baffle and confound their antagoniſts by the force of reaſon. As for himſelf, he only repeated to his adverſaries

veriaries the articles in which he firmly believed, and in the profeſſion of which he was determined to die. It is in this manner that the mathematician proceeds upon propoſitions which he has once demonſtrated; and though the demonſtration may have ſlipt out of his memory, he builds upon the truth, becauſe he knows it was demonſtrated. This rule is abſolutely neceſſary for weaker minds, and, in ſome meaſure, for men of the greateſt abilities.

But to theſe laſt I will propoſe, in the ſecond place, that they ſhould lay up in their memories, and always keep by them in a readineſs, thoſe arguments which appear to them of the greateſt ſtrength, and which cannot be got over by all the doubts and cavils of infidelity.

But, in the third place, there is nothing which ſtrengthens faith more than morality. Faith and morality naturally produce each other. A man is quickly convinced of the truth of religion, who finds it is not againſt his intereſt that it ſhould be true. The pleaſure he receives at preſent, and the happineſs which he promiſes himſelf from it hereafter, will both diſpoſe him very powerfully to give credit to it, according to the ordinary obſervation, that 'we are eaſy to believe what we wiſh.' It is very certain, that a man of ſound reaſon cannot forbear cloſing with religion, upon an impartial examination of it; but, at the ſame time, it is certain, that faith is kept alive in us, and gathers ſtrength from practice more than from ſpeculation.

There is ſtill another method which is more perſuaſive than any of the former, and that is an habitual adoration of the Supreme Being, as well in conſtant acts of mental worſhip, as in outward forms. The devout man does not only believe, but feels there is a Deity. He has actual ſenſations of him; his experience concurs with his reaſon; he ſees him more and more in all his intercourſes with him, and even in this life almoſt loſes his faith in conviction.

The laſt method which I ſhall mention for the giving life to a man's faith, is frequent retirement from the world, accompanied

accompanied with religious meditation. When a man thinks of any thing in the darkneſs of the night, whatever deep impreſſions it may make in his mind, they are apt to vaniſh as ſoon as the day breaks about him. The light and noiſe of the day, which are perpetually ſoliciting his ſenſes, and calling of his attention, wear out of his mind the thoughts that imprinted themſelves in it, with ſo much ſtrength, during the ſilence and darkneſs of the night. A man finds the ſame difference as to himſelf in a crowd and in a ſolitude: The mind is ſtunned and dazzled amidſt the variety of objects which preſs upon her in a great city: She cannot apply herſelf to the conſideration of thoſe things which are of the utmoſt concern to her. The cares or pleaſures of the world ſtrive in with every thought, and a multitude of vicious examples give a kind of juſtification to our folly. In our retirements every thing diſpoſes us to be ſerious. In courts and cities we are entertained with the works of men: in the country with thoſe of God. One is the province of art, the other of nature. Faith and devotion naturally grow in the mind of every reaſonable man, who ſees the impreſſions of Divine Power and Wiſdom in every object on which he caſts his eye. The Supreme Being has made the beſt arguments for his own exiſtence, in the formation of the heavens and the earth, and theſe are arguments which a man of ſenſe cannot forbear attending to, who is out of the noiſe and hurry of human affairs. Ariſtotle ſays, that ſhould a man live under ground, and there converſe with works of art and mechaniſm, and ſhould afterwards be brought up into the open day, and ſee the ſeveral glories of the heaven and earth, he would immediately pronounce them the works of ſuch a Being as we define God to be. The Pſalmiſt has very beautiful ſtrokes of poetry to this purpoſe, in that exalted ſtrain, 'the heavens declare the Glory of God: and the 'firmament ſheweth his handy work. One day telleth 'another: and one night certifieth another. There is 'neither ſpeech nor language: but their voices are heard 'among them. Their ſound is gone out into all lands:

'and their words into the ends of the world.' As such a bold and sublime manner of thinking furnishes very noble matter for an Ode, the reader may see it wrought into the following one.

I.

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heav'ns, a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim:
Th' unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.

II.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wond'rous tale,
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth:
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

III.

What though, in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terr-strial ball!
What though nor real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found!
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine,
'The Hand that made us is Divine.' C.

SECTION IX.

Against the modern Freethinkers.

SIR,

'THERE arrived in this neighbourhood two days 'ago one of your gay gentlemen of the town, who 'being attended at his entry with a servant of his own, 'besides a countryman he had taken up for his guide, 'excited the curiosity of the village to learn whence and 'what he might be. The countryman (to whom they 'applied as the most easy of access) knew little more than 'that the gentleman came from London to travel and see 'fashions, and was, as he heard say, a freethinker: What

'religion

'religion that might be, he could not tell; and for his 'own part, if they had not told him the man was a free-'thinker, he ſhould have gueſſed, by his way of talking, 'he was little better than a heathen; excepting only 'that he had been a good gentleman to him, and made 'him drunk twice in one day, over and above what they 'had bargained for.

'I do not look upon the ſimplicity of this, and ſeveral 'odd enquiries with which I ſhall trouble you, to be 'wondered at, much leſs can I think that our youths 'of fine wit, and enlarged underſtandings, have any rea-'ſon to laugh. There is no neceſſity that every ſquire 'in Great Britain ſhould know what the word freethinker 'ſtands for; but it were much to be wiſhed, that they 'who valued themſelves upon that conceited title, were 'a little better inſtructed in what it ought to ſtand for; 'and that they would not perſuade themſelves a man is 'really and truly a freethinker in any tolerable ſenſe, 'merely by virtue of his being an atheiſt, or an infidel 'of any other diſtinction. It may be doubted, with good 'reaſon, whether there ever was in nature a more abject, 'ſlaviſh, and bigotted generation than the tribe of *Beaux* '*Eſprits*, at preſent ſo prevailing in this iſland. Their 'pretenſion to be freethinkers, is no other than rakes 'have to be freelivers, and ſavages to be freemen; that 'is, they can think whatever they have a mind to, and 'give themſelves up to whatever conceit the extravagancy 'of their inclination, or their fancy, ſhall ſuggeſt; they 'can think as wildly as talk and act, and will not en-'dure that their wit ſhould be controlled by ſuch formal 'things as decency and common ſenſe: deduction, co-'herence, conſiſtency, and all the rules of reaſon, they ac-'cordingly diſdain, as too preciſe and mechanical for 'men of a liberal education.

'This, as far as I could ever learn from their writings, 'or my own obſervation, is a true account of the Britiſh 'freethinker. Our viſitant here, who gave occaſion to 'this paper, has brought with him a new ſyſtem of com-'mon ſenſe, the particulars of which I am not yet ac-

'quainted with, but will loſe no opportunity of inform-
'ing myſelf whether it contain any thing worth Mr.
'Spectator's notice. In the mean time, Sir, I cannot
'but think it would be for the good of mankind, if you
'would take this ſubject into your own conſideration,
'and convince the hopeful youth of our nation that li-
'centionſneſs is not freedom; or, if ſuch a paradox will
'not be underſtood, that prejudice towards atheiſm is
'not impartiality.'

'I am, Sir, your moſt humble Servant,

T. PHILONOUS.

Quidquid eſt illud, quod ſentit, quod ſapit, quod vult, quod viget, cœleſte & divinum eſt, ob eamque rem æternum ſit neceſſe eſt. TULL.

I AM diverted from the account I was givrng the town of my particular concerns, by caſting my eye upon a treatiſe, which I could not overlook without an inexcuſable negligence, and want of concern for all the civil, as well as religious intereſts of mankind. This piece has for its title, 'A Diſcourſe of Freethinking, occaſioned by 'the riſe and growth of a ſect called Freethinkers.' The author very methodically enters upon his argument, and ſays, 'by freethinking, I mean the uſe of the under-'ſtanding in endeavouring to find out the meaning of 'any propoſition whatſoever, in conſidering the nature 'of the evidence for or againſt, and in judging of it ac-'cording to the ſeeming force or weakneſs of the evi-'dence.' As ſoon as he has delivered this definition, from which one would expect he did not deſign to ſhew a particular inclination for or againſt any thing before he had conſidered it, he gives up all title to the character of a freethinker, with the moſt apparent prejudice againſt a body of men, whom of all other a good man would be the moſt careful not to violate, I mean men in holy orders. Perſons who have devoted themſelves to the ſervice of God, are venerable to all who fear him; and it is a certain characteriſtic of a diſſolute and ungoverned mind, to rail or ſpeak diſreſpectfully of them in general. It is certain, that in ſo great a crowd of men ſome will intrude, who are of tempers very unbecoming their function; but

becauſe

becauſe ambition and avarice are ſometimes lodged in that boſom, which ought to be the dwelling of ſanctity and devotion, muſt this unreaſonable author vilify the whole order? He has not taken the leaſt care to diſguiſe his being an enemy to the perſons againſt whom he writes, nor any where granted that the inſtitution of religious men to ſerve at the altar, and inſtruct ſuch who are not as wiſe as himſelf, is at all neceſſary or deſirable; but proceeds, without the leaſt apology, to undermine their credit, and fruſtrate their labours: Whatever clergymen, in diſputes againſt each other, have unguardedly uttered, is here recorded in ſuch a manner as to affect religion itſelf, by wreſting conceſſions to its advantage from its own teachers. If this be true, as ſure any man that reads the diſcourſe muſt allow it is; and if religion is the ſtrongeſt tie of human ſociety; in what manner are we to treat this our common enemy, who promotes the growth of ſuch a ſect as he calls freethinkers? He that would burn a houſe, and juſtify the action by aſſerting he is a free agent, would be more excuſable than this author in uttering what he has from the right of a freethinker: but they are a ſet of dry, joyleſs, dull fellows, who want capacities and talents to make a figure amongſt mankind upon benevolent and generous principles, that think to ſurmount their own natural meanneſs, by laying offences in the way of ſuch as make it their endeavour to excel upon the received maxims and honeſt arts of life. If it were poſſible to laugh at ſo melancholy an affair as what hazards ſalvation, it would be no unpleaſant enquiry to aſk what ſatisfaction they reap, what extraordinary gratification of ſenſe, or what delicious libertiniſm this ſect of freethinkers enjoy, after getting looſe of the laws which confine the paſſions of other men? Would it not be a matter of mirth to find, after all, that the heads of this growing ſect are ſober wretches, who prate whole evenings over coffee, and have not themſelves fire enough to be any further debauchees, than merely in principle? Theſe ſages of iniquity are, it ſeems, themſelves only ſpeculatively wicked, and are contented

that all the abandoned young men of the age are kept ſafe from reflection by dabbling in their rhapſodies, without taſting the pleaſures for which their doctrines leaves them unaccountable. Thus do heavy mortals, only to gratify a dry pride of heart, give up the intereſts of another world, without enlarging their gratifications in this: but it is certain that there are a ſort of men that can puzzle truth, but cannot enjoy the ſatisfaction of it. This ſame freethinker is a creature unacquainted with the emotions which poſſeſs great minds when they are turned for religion, and it is apparent that he is untouched with any ſuch ſenſation as the rapture of devotion. Whatever one of theſe ſcorners may think, they certainly want parts to be devout; and a ſenſe of piety towards heaven, as well as the ſenſe of any thing elſe, is lively and warm in proportion to the faculties of the head and heart. This gentleman may be aſſured he has not a taſte for what he pretends to decry, and the poor man is certainly more a blockhead than an atheiſt. I muſt repeat, that he wants capacity to reliſh what true piety is; and he is as capable of writing an heroic poem, as making a fervent prayer. When men are thus low and narrow in their apprehenſions of things, and at the ſame time vain, they are naturally led to think every thing they do not underſtand, not to be underſtood. Their contradiction to what is urged by others, is a neceſſary conſequence of their incapacity to receive it. The atheiſtical fellows who appeared the laſt age did not ſerve the devil for nought; but revelled in exceſſes ſuitable to their principles, while in theſe unhappy days miſchief is done for miſchief's ſake. Theſe freethinkers, who lead the lives of recluſe ſtudents, for no other purpoſe but to diſturb the ſentiments of other men, put me in mind of the monſtrous recreation of thoſe late wild youths, who, without provocation, had a wantonneſs in ſtabbing and defacing thoſe they met with. When ſuch writers as this, who has no ſpirit but that of malice, pretend to inform the age, Mohocks and Cut-throats may well ſet up for wits and men of pleaſure.

It,

It will be, perhaps, expected, that I ſhould produce ſome inſtances of the ill-intention of this freethinker, to ſupport the treatment I here give him. In his 52d page he ſays,

'2dly, The Prieſts throughout the world differ about 'the Scriptures, and the authority of Scriptures. The Bra-'mins have a book of ſcripture called the Shaſter. The 'Perſees have their Zundavaſtaw. The Bonzes of Chi-'na have books written by the diſciples of Fohe, whom 'they call the God and Saviour of the world, who was 'born to teach the way to ſalvation, and to give ſatis-'faction for all men's ſins. The Talapoans of Siam 'have a book of ſcripture written by Sommonocodom, 'who, the Siameſe ſay, was born of a Virgin, and was 'the God expected by the univerſe. The Dervizes have 'their Alcoran.'

I believe there is no one will diſpute the author's great impartiality in ſetting down the accounts of theſe different religions. And I think it is pretty evident he delivers the matter with an air, that betrays the hiſtory of one born of a virgin has as much authority with him from St. Sommonocodom as from St. Matthew. Thus he treats revelation. Then as to philoſophy, he tells you, p. 136. 'Cicero produces this as 'an inſtance of a probable opinion, that they who ſtudy 'philoſophy do not believe there are any gods:' and then, from conſideration of various notions, he affirms; Tully concludes, 'That there can be nothing after death.'

As to what he miſrepreſents of Tully, the ſhort ſentence on the head of this paper is enough to oppoſe; but who can have patience to reflect upon the aſſemblage of impoſtures among which our author places the religion of his country? As for my part, I cannot ſee any poſſible interpretation to give this work, but a deſign to ſubvert and ridicule the authority of ſcripture. The peace and tranquillity of the nation, and regards even above thoſe, are ſo much concerned in this matter, that it is difficult to expreſs ſufficient ſorrow for the offender, or indignation againſt him. But if ever a man deſerved to be denied the common benefits of air and water, it is the author of A Diſcourſe of Freethinking.

——mentisque capacius altæ. OVID.

AS I was the other day, taking a ſolitary walk in St. Paul's, I indulged my thoughts in the purſuit of a certain analogy between the Fabric and the Chriſtian Church in the largeſt ſenſe. The divine order and œconomy of the one, ſeemed to be emblematically ſet forth by the juſt, plain, and majeſtic architecture of the other. And as the one conſiſts of a great variety of parts united in the ſame regular deſign, according to the trueſt art, and moſt exact proportion; ſo the other contains a decent ſubordination of members, various ſacred inſtitutions, ſublime doctrines, and ſolid precepts of mortality digeſted into the ſame deſign, and with an admirable concurrence tending to one view, the happineſs and exaltation of human nature.

In the midſt of my contemplation, I beheld a fly upon one of the pillars; and it ſtraightway came into my head, that this ſame fly was a freethinker. For it required ſome comprehenſion in the eye of the Spectator to take in at one view the various parts of the building, in order to obſerve their ſymmetry and deſign. But to the fly, whoſe proſpect was confined to a little part of one of the ſtones of a ſingle pillar, the joint beauty of the whole, or the diſtinct uſe of its parts, were inconſpicuous, and nothing could appear but ſmall inequalities in the ſurface of the hewn ſtone, which in the view of that inſect ſeemed ſo many deformed rocks and precipices.

The thoughts of a freethinker are employed on certain minute particularities of religion, the difficulty of a ſingle text, or the unaccountableneſs of ſome ſtep of providence or point of doctrine to his narrow faculties, without comprehending the ſcope and deſign of chriſtianity, the perfection to which it raiſeth human nature, the light it hath ſhed abroad in the world, and the cloſe connexion it hath as well with the good of public ſocieties, as with that of particular perſons.

This raiſed in me ſome reflections on that frame or diſpoſition which is called Largeneſs of mind, its neceſſity towards forming a true judgment of things, and where the

the ſoul is not incurably ſtinted by nature, what are the likelieſt methods to give it enlargement.

It is evident that philoſophy doth open and enlarge the mind, by the general views to which men are habituated in that ſtudy, and by the contemplation of more numerous and diſtant objects than fall within the ſphere of mankind in the ordinary purſuits of life. Hence it comes to paſs, that philoſophers judge of moſt things very differently from the vulgar. Some inſtances of this may be ſeen in the Theætetus of Plato, where Socrates makes the following remarks among others of the like nature.

'When a philoſopher hears ten thouſand acres mentioned as a great eſtate, he looks upon it as an inconſiderable ſpot, having been uſed to contemplate the whole globe of the earth. Or when he beholds a man elated with the nobility of his race, becauſe he can reckon a ſeries of ſeven rich anceſtors, the philoſopher thinks him a ſtupid ignorant fellow, whoſe mind cannot reach to a general view of human nature, which ſhould ſhew him that we have all innumerable anceſtors, among whom are crowds of rich and poor, kings and ſlaves, Greeks and barbarians.' Thus far Socrates, who was accounted wiſer than the reſt of the heathens, for notions which approach the neareſt to chriſtianity.

As all parts and branches of philoſophy, or ſpeculative knowledge, are uſeful in that reſpect, aſtronomy is peculiarly adapted to remedy a little and narrow ſpirit. In that ſcience there are good reaſons aſſigned to prove the ſun an hundred thouſand times larger than our earth: and the diſtance of the ſtars ſo prodigious, that a cannon-bullet continuing in its ordinary rapid motion, would not arrive from hence at the neareſt of them, in the ſpace of an hundred and fifty thouſand years. Theſe ideas wonderfully dilate and expand the mind. There is ſomething in the immenſity of this diſtance, that ſhocks and overwhelms the imagination; it is too big for the graſp of the human intellect: eſtates, provinces, and kingdoms vaniſh at its preſence. It were to be wiſhed a certain prince, who hath encouraged the ſtudy of it in his ſubjects, had been himſelf

himſelf a proficient in aſtronomy. This might have ſhewed him how mean an ambition that was, which terminated in a ſmall part of what is itſelf but a point, in reſpect of that part of the univerſe which lies within our view.

But the chriſtian religion ennobleth and enlargeth the mind beyond any other profeſſion or ſcience whatſoever. Upon that ſcheme, while the earth and the tranſient enjoyments of this life, ſhrink in the narroweſt dimenſions, and are accounted as the duſt of a balance, the drop of a bucket, yea, leſs than nothing, the intellectual world opens wider to our view: The perfections of the Deity, the nature and excellence of virtue, the dignity of the human ſoul, are diſplayed in the largeſt characters. The mind of man ſeems to adapt itſelf to the different nature of its objects; it is contracted and abaſed by being converſant in little and low things, and feels a proportionable enlargement ariſing from the contemplation of theſe great and ſublime ideas.

The greatneſs of things is comparative; and this does not only hold, in reſpect of extenſion, but likewiſe in reſpect of dignity, duration, and all kinds of perfection. Aſtronomy opens the mind, and alters our judgment, with regard to the magnitude of extended beings; but chriſtianity produceth an univerſal greatneſs of ſoul. Philoſophy encreaſeth our views in every reſpect, but chriſtianity extends them to a degree beyond the light of nature.

How mean muſt the moſt exalted potentate upon earth appear to that eye which takes in innumerable orders of bleſſed ſpirits, differing in glory and perfection? How little muſt the amuſements of ſenſe, and the ordinary occupations of mortal men, ſeem to one who is engaged in ſo noble a purſuit, as the aſſimilation of himſelf to the Deity, which is the proper employment of every chriſtian?

And the improvement which grows from habituating the mind to the comprehenſive views of religion muſt not be thought wholly to regard the underſtanding. Nothing

is

is of greater force to ſubdue the inordinate motions of the heart, and to regulate the will. Whether a man be actuated by his paſſions or his reaſon, theſe are firſt wrought upon by ſome object, which ſtirs the ſoul in proportion to its apparent dimenſions. Hence irreligious men, whoſe ſhort proſpects are filled with earth, and ſenſe, and mortal life, are invited, by theſe mean ideas, to actions proportionably little and low. But a mind, whoſe views are enlightened and extended by religion, is animated to nobler purſuits by more ſublime and remote objects. There is not any inſtance of weakneſs in the freethinkers that raiſes my indignation more, than their pretending to ridicule the chriſtians as men of narrow underſtandings, and to paſs themſelves upon the world for perſons of ſuperior ſenſe, and more enlarged views. But I leave it to any impartial man to judge which hath the nobler ſentiments, which the greater views; he whoſe notions are ſtinted to a few miſerable inlets of ſenſe, or he whoſe ſentiments are raiſed above the common taſte by the anticipation of thoſe delights which will ſatiate the ſoul, when the whole capacity of her nature is branched out into new faculties? He who looks for nothing beyond this ſhort ſpan of duration, or he whoſe aims are co-extended with the endleſs length of eternity? He who derives his ſpirit from the elements, or he who thinks it was inſpired by the Almighty?

'SIR,

'SINCE you have not refuſed to inſert matters of a 'theological nature in thoſe excellent papers, with 'which you daily both inſtruct and divert us, I earneſtly 'deſire you to print the following paper. The notions 'therein advanced are, for aught I know, new to the 'Engliſh reader, and if they are true, will afford room 'for many uſeful inferences.

'No man that reads the Evangeliſts, but muſt obſerve 'that our bleſſed Saviour does upon every occaſion bend 'all his force and zeal to rebuke and correct the hypo'criſy of the Phariſees. Upon that ſubject he ſhews a 'warmth which one meets with in no other part of his

ſermons.

'ſermons. They are ſo enraged at the public detection
'of their ſecret villanies, by one who ſaw through all
'their diſguiſes, that they joined in the proſecution of
'him, which was ſo vigorous, that Pilate at laſt con-
'ſented to his death. The frequency and vehemence of
'theſe reprehenſions of our Lord, have made the word
'Phariſee to be looked upon as odious among chriſtians,
'and to mean only one who lays the utmoſt ſtreſs upon
'the outward, ceremonial, and ritual part of his reli-
'gion, without having ſuch an inward ſenſe of it, as
'would lead him to a general and ſincere obſervance of
'thoſe duties which can only ariſe from the heart, and
'which cannot be ſuppoſed to ſpring from a deſire of ap-
'plauſe or profit.

'This is plain from the hiſtory of the life and actions
'of our Lord, in the four Evangeliſts. One of them,
'St. Luke, continued his hiſtory down in a ſecond part,
'which we commonly call the Acts of the Apoſtles.
'Now it is obſervable, that in this ſecond part, in
'which he gives a particular account of what the apoſtles
'did and ſuffered at Jeruſalem upon their firſt entering
'upon their commiſſion, and alſo of what St. Paul did
'after he was conſecrated to the apoſtleſhip till his jour-
'ney to Rome, we find not only no oppoſition to chriſ-
'tianity from the Phariſees, but ſeveral ſignal occaſions
'in which they aſſiſted its firſt teachers, when the chriſ-
'tian church was in its infant ſtate. The true zealous
'and hearty perſecutors of chriſtianity at that time were
'the Sadducees, whom we may truly call the freethinkes
'among the Jews. They believed neither reſurrection,
'nor angel, nor ſpirit, i. e. in plain Engliſh, they were
'Deiſts at leaſt, if not Atheiſts. They could outwardly
'comply with, and conform to the eſtabliſhment in
'church and ſtate, and they pretended forſooth to belong
'only to a particular ſect, and becauſe there was nothing
'in the law of Moſes which in ſo many words aſſerted a
'reſurrection, they appeared to adhere to that in a parti-
'cular manner beyond any other part of the Old Teſta-
'ment. Theſe men, therefore, juſtly dreaded the ſpread

'ing

'ing of chriſtianity after the aſcenſion of our Lord, be-
'cauſe it was wholly founded upon this reſurrection.

'Accordingly, therefore, when Peter and John had
'cured the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple,
'and had thereby raiſed a wonderful expectation of them-
'ſelves among the people, the Prieſts and Sadduceees,
'Acts iv. clapt them up, and ſent them away for the
'firſt time with a ſevere reprimand. Quickly after,
'when the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, and the many
'miracles wrought after thoſe ſevere inſtances of the
'apoſtolical power had alarmed the Prieſts, who looked
'upon the temple-worſhip, and conſequently their
'bread, to be ſtruck at, theſe prieſts and all they that
'were with them, who were of the ſect of the Sadducees,
'impriſoned the apoſtles, intending to examine them in
'the great council the next day. Where, when the coun-
'cil met, and the prieſts and Sadducees propoſed to
'proceed with great rigour againſt them, we find that
'Gamaliel, a very eminent Phariſee, St. Paul's maſter,
'a man of great authority among the people, many of
'whoſe determinations we have ſtill preſerved in the bo-
'dy of the Jewiſh traditions, commonly called the Tal-
'mud, oppoſed their heat, and told them, for aught they
'knew, the apoſtles might be acted by the Spirit of God,
'and that in ſuch a caſe it would be in vain to oppoſe
'them, ſince if they did ſo, they would only fight againſt
'God, whom they could not overcome. Gamaliel was
'ſo conſiderable a man among his own ſect, that we may
'reaſonably believe he ſpoke the ſenſe of the party, as
'well as his own. St. Stephen's martyrdom came on
'preſently after, in which we do not find the Phariſees,
'as ſuch, had any hand; it is probable that he was pro-
'ſecuted by thoſe who had before impriſoned Peter and
'John. One novice, indeed, of that ſect was ſo zealous
'that he kept the clothes of thoſe that ſtoned him. This
'novice, whoſe zeal went beyond all bounds, was the
'great St. Paul, who was peculiarly honoured with a call
'from heaven by which he was converted, and he was
'afterwards, by God himſelf, appointed to be the apoſtle

'of the Gentiles. Beſides him, and him too reclaimed 'in ſo glorious a manner, we find no one Phariſee either 'named or hinted at by St. Luke, as an oppoſer of 'chriſtianity in thoſe earlieſt days. What others might 'do we know not. But we find the Sadducees purſuing 'St. Paul even to death at his coming to Jeruſalem, in 'the xxiſt of the Acts. He then, upon all occaſions, 'owned himſelf to be a Phariſee. In the xxiid chapter 'he told the people, that he had been bred up at the feet 'of Gamaliel after the ſtricteſt manner, in the law of 'his fathers. In the xxiiid chapter he told the council, 'that he was a Phariſee, the ſon of a Phariſee, and that 'he was accuſed for aſſerting the Hope and Reſurrection 'of the dead, which was their darling doctrine. Here-'upon the Phariſees ſtood by him, and though they 'did not own our Saviour to be the Meſſiah, yet they 'would not deny but ſome angel or ſpirit might have 'ſpoke to him, and then if they oppoſed him they ſhould 'fight againſt God. This was the very argument Ga-'maliel had uſed before. The Reſurrection of our Lord, 'which they ſaw ſo ſtrenuouſly aſſerted by the apoſtles, 'whoſe miracles they alſo ſaw and owned, (Acts iv. 16.) 'ſeems to have ſtruck them, and many of them were 'converted (Acts xv. 5.) even without a miracle, and 'the reſt ſtood ſtill and made no oppoſition.

'We ſee here what the part was which the Phariſees 'acted in this important conjuncture. Of the Sadducees, 'we meet not with one in the whole apoſtolic hiſtory 'that was converted. We hear of no miracles wrought 'to convince any of them, though there was an eminent 'one wrought to reclaim a Phariſee. St. Paul, we ſee, 'after his converſion, always gloried in his having been 'bred a Phariſee. He did ſo to the people of Jeruſalem, 'to the great council, to king Agrippa, and to the Phi-'lippians. So that from hence we may juſtly infer, that 'it was not their inſtitution, which was in itſelf lauda-'ble, which our bleſſed Saviour found fault with, but it 'was their hypocriſy, their covetouſneſs, their oppreſſion, 'their overvaluing themſelves upon their zeal for the cere-

'monial

monial law, and their adding to that yoke by their ‘ traditions, all which were not properly eſſentials of ‘ their inſtitution, that our Lord blamed.

‘ But I muſt not run on. What I would obſerve, Sir, ‘ is, that atheiſm is more dreadful, and would be more ‘ grievous to human ſociety, if it were inveſted with ‘ ſufficient power, than religion under any ſhape, where ‘ its profeſſors do at the bottom believe what they pro- ‘ feſs. I deſpair not of a papiſt's converſion, though I ‘ would not willingly lie at a zealot Papiſt's mercy; and ‘ no Proteſtant would, if he knew what popery is, though ‘ he truly believes in our Saviour. But the freethinker, ‘ who ſcarcely believes there is a God, and certainly diſ- ‘ believes Revelation, is a very terrible animal. He will ‘ talk of natural rights, and the juſt freedoms of man- ‘ kind, no longer than till he himſelf gets into power; ‘ and by the inſtance before us, we have ſmall grounds ‘ to hope for his ſalvation, or that God will ever vouch- ‘ ſafe him ſufficient grace to reclaim him from errors ‘ which have been ſo immediately levelled againſt him- ‘ ſelf.

‘ If theſe notions be true, as I verily believe thy are, ‘ I thought they might be worth publiſhing at this time, ‘ for which reaſon they are ſent in this manner to you, by,

‘ SIR,

‘ Your moſt humble Servant,

‘ M. N.’

SECTION X.

Immortality of the Soul, and future ſtate.

Neſcio quomodo inhæret in mentibus quaſi ſeculorum quoddam augurium futurorum; idque in maximis ingeniis altiſſimiſque animis exiſtit maxime & apparet facillime. CIT. TUSC. QUAEST.

To the SPECTATOR.

‘ SIR,

‘ I AM fully perſuaded that one of the beſt ſprings of ‘ generous and worthy actions, is the having gene- ‘ rous and worthy thoughts of ourſelves. Whoever has ‘ a mean opinion of the dignity of his nature, will act in ‘ no higher a rank than he has allotted himſelf in his

'own eſtimation. If he conſiders his being as circum-
'ſcribed by the uncertain term of a few years, his de-
'ſigns will be contracted into the ſame narrow ſpan he
'imagines is to bound his exiſtence. How can he ex-
'alt his thoughts to any thing great and noble, who
'only believes that, after a ſhort turn on the ſtage of
'this world, he is to ſink into oblivion, and to looſe
'his conſciouſneſs for ever.

'For this reaſon I am of opinion, that ſo uſeful and
'elevated a contemplation as that of the Soul's Immor-
'tality cannot be reſumed too often. There is not a
'more improving exerciſe to the human mind than to be
'frequently reviving its own great privileges and en-
'dowments; nor a more effectual means to awaken in
'us an ambition raiſed above low objects and little pur-
'ſuits, than to value ourſelves as heirs of eternity.

'It is a very great ſatisfaction to conſider the beſt
'and wiſeſt of mankind in all nations and ages, aſſert-
'ing, as with one voice, this their birth-right, and to
'find it ratified by an expreſs revelation. At the ſame
'time, if we turn our thoughts inward upon ourſelves,
'we may meet with a kind of ſecret ſenſe concurring
'with the proofs of our own immortality.

'You have, in my opinion, raiſed a preſumptive ar-
'gument from the increaſing appetite the mind has to
'knowledge, and to the extending its own faculties,
'which cannot be accompliſhed, as the more reſtrained
'perfection of lower creatures may, in the limits of a
'ſhort life. I think another probable conjecture may
'be raiſed from our appetite to duration itſelf, and from
'a reflection in our progreſs through the ſeveral ſtages
'of it: We are complaining, as you obſerve in a form-
'er ſpeculation, of the ſhortneſs of life, and yet are per-
'petually hurrying over the parts of it to arrive at cer-
'tain little ſettlements or imaginary points of reſt, which
'are diſperſed up and down in it.

'Now let us conſider what happens to us when we ar-
'rive at thoſe imaginary points of reſt: Do we ſtop our
'motion, and ſit down ſatisfied in the ſettlement we

'have

'have gained? or are we not removing the boundary, 'and marking out new points of reſt, to which we preſs 'forward with the like eagerneſs, and which ceaſe to be 'ſuch as faſt as we attain them? Our caſe is like that of 'a traveller upon the Alps, who ſhould fancy that the 'top of the next hill muſt end his journey, becauſe it 'terminates his proſpect; but he no ſooner arrives at it, 'than he ſees new ground and other hills beyond it, and 'continues to travel on as before.

'This is ſo plainly every man's condition in life, that 'there is no one who has obſerved any thing, but may 'obſerve, that as faſt as his time wears away, his ap-'petite to ſomething future remains. The uſe there-'fore I would make of it, is this: That ſince nature '(as ſome love to expreſs it) does nothing in vain, or, 'to ſpeak properly, ſince the Author of our being has 'planted no wandering paſſion in it, no deſire which has 'not its object, futurity is the proper object of the paſ-'ſion ſo conſtantly exerciſed about it; and this reſtleſ-'neſs in the preſent, this aſſigning ourſelves over to far-'ther ſtages of duration, this ſucceſſive graſping at ſome-'what ſtill to come, appears to me (whatever it may 'to others) as a kind of inſtinct or natural ſymptom 'which the mind of man has of its own immortality.

'I take it at the ſame time for granted, that the im-'mortality of the ſoul is ſufficiently eſtabliſhed by other 'arguments: and if ſo, this appetite, which otherwiſe 'would be very unaccountable and abſurd, ſeems very 'reaſonable, and adds ſtrength to the concluſion. But 'I am amazed when I conſide. there are creatures capa-'ble of thought, who, in ſpite of every argument, can 'form to themſelves a ſullen ſatisfaction in thinking 'otherwiſe. There is ſomething ſo pitifully mean in 'the inverted ambition of that man who can hope for 'annihilation, and pleaſe himſelf to think that his whole 'fabric ſhall one day crumble into duſt, and mix with 'the maſs of inanimate beings, that it equally deſerves 'our admiration and pity. The myſtery of ſuch man's 'unbelief is not hard to be penetrated; and indeed a-

'mounts to nothing more than a ſordid hope that they 'ſhall not be immortal, becauſe they dare not do ſo.

'This brings me back to my firſt obſervation, and 'gives me occaſion to ſay further, That as worthy ac- 'tions ſpring from worthy thoughts, ſo worthy thoughts 'are likewiſe the conſequence of worthy actions: But 'the wretch who has degraded himſelf below the cha- 'racter of immortality, as very willing to reſign his 'pretenſion to it, and to ſubſtitute in its room a dark 'negative happineſs in the extinction of his being.

'The admirable Shakeſpear, has given us a ſtrong 'image of the unſupported condition of ſuch a perſon in 'his laſt minutes, in the ſecond part of King Henry the 'Sixth, where Cardinal Beaufort, who had been con- 'cerned in the murder of the good Duke Humphrey, is 'repreſented on his death-bed. After ſome ſhort con- 'fuſed ſpeeches, which ſhew an imagination diſturbed 'with guilt, juſt as he is expiring, King Henry ſtand- 'ing by him, full of compaſſion, ſays,

"Lord Cardinal! if thou think'ſt on heav'n's bliſs,
"Hold up thy hand, make ſignal of that Hope!---
"He dies and makes no ſign!"

'The deſpair which is here ſhewn, without a word 'or action on the part of the dying perſon, is beyond 'what could be painted by the moſt forcible expreſſions 'whatever.

'I ſhall not purſue this thought further, but only 'add, that as annihilation is not to be had with a wiſh, 'ſo it is the moſt abject thing in the world to wiſh it. 'What are honour, fame, wealth or power, when com- 'pared with the generous expectation of a being, with- 'out end, and a happineſs adequate to that being.

I am, Sir,

'Your moſt obedient,

'Humble Servant,

'T. D.'

Εν ελπισιν χρη τους σοφους εχειν βιον. EURIPID.

THE time preſent ſeldom affords ſufficient employment to the mind of man. Objects of pain or pleaſure, love or admiration, do not lie thick enough together in life, to keep the ſoul in conſtant action, and ſupply an immediate exerciſe to its faculties. In order, therefore, to remedy this defect, that the mind may not want buſineſs, but always have materials for thinking, ſhe is endowed with certain powers, that can recal what is paſſed, and anticipate what is to come.

That wonderful faculty, which we call the memory, is perpetually looking back, when we have nothing preſent to entertain us. It is like thoſe repoſitories in ſeveral animals, that are filled with ſtores of their former food, on which they may ruminate when their preſent paſture fails.

As the memory relieves the mind in her vacant moments, and prevents any chaſms of thought, by ideas of what is paſt, we have other faculties that agitate and employ her upon what is to come. Theſe are the paſſions of hope and fear.

By theſe two paſſions, we reach forward into futurity, and bring up to our preſent thoughts, objects that lie hid in the remoteſt depths of time. We ſuffer miſery, and enjoy happineſs, before they are in being; we can ſet the ſun and ſtars forward, or loſe ſight of them by wandering into thoſe retired parts of eternity, when the heavens and earth ſhall be no more.

By the way; who can imagine that the exiſtence of a creature is to be circumſcribed by time, whoſe thoughts are not? But I ſhall, in this paper, confine myſelf to that particular paſſion, which goes by the name of hope.

Our actual enjoyments are ſo few and tranſient, that man would be a very miſerable being, were he not endowed with this paſſion, which gives him a taſte of thoſe good things, that may poſſibly come into his poſſeſſion. "We ſhould hope for every thing that is good,

"ſays

" ſays the old poet Linus, becauſe there is nothing " which may not be hoped for, and nothing but what " the gods are able to give us." Hope quickens all the ſtill parts of life, and keeps the mind awake in her moſt remiſs and indolent hours. It gives habitual ſerenity and good humour. It is a kind of vital heat in the ſoul, that cheers and gladdens her, when ſhe does not attend to it. It makes pain eaſy, and labour pleaſant.

Beſides theſe ſeveral advantages which riſe from hope, there is another which is none of the leaſt, and that is, its great efficacy in preſerving us from ſetting too high a value on preſent enjoyments. The ſaying of Cæſar is very well known. When he had given away all his eſtate, in gratuities among his friends, one of them aſked what he had left for himſelf; to which that great man replied, hope. His natural magnanimity hindered him from priſing what he was certainly poſſeſſed of, and turned all his thoughts upon ſomething more valuable than he had in view. I queſtion not but every reader will draw a moral from his ſtory, and apply it to himſelf, without my direction.

The old ſtory of Pandora's box, (which many of the learned believe was formed among the heathens, upon the tradition of the fall of man) ſhews us how deplorable a ſtate, they thought the preſent life, without hope. To ſet forth the utmoſt condition of miſery, they tell us, that our fore-father, according to the Pagan theology, had a great veſſel preſented him by Pandora. Upon his lifting up the lid of it, ſays the fable, there flew out all the calamities and diſtempers, incident to men, from which, 'till that time, they had been altogether exempt. Hope, who had been incloſed in the cup with ſo much bad company, inſtead of flying off with the reſt, ſtuck ſo cloſe to the lid of it, that it was ſhut down upon her.

I ſhall make but two reflections upon what I have hitherto ſaid. Firſt, that no kind of life is ſo happy, as that which is full of hope, eſpecially when the hope

is

is well grounded, and when the object of it is of an exalted kind, and in its nature proper to make the perſon happy who enjoys it. This propoſition muſt be very evident to thoſe who conſider how few are the preſent enjoyments, of the moſt happy man, and how inſufficient to give him an entire ſatisfaction and acquieſcence in them.

My next obſervation is this, that a religious life is that which moſt abounds in a well-grounded hope, and ſuch an one as is fixed on objects that are capable of making us entirely happy. This hope, in a religious man, is much more ſure and certain than the hope of any temporal bleſſing, as it is ſtrengthened not only by reaſon, but by faith. It has at the ſame time, its eye perpetually fixed on that ſtate, which implies in the very notion of it, the moſt full and the moſt compleat happineſs.

I have before ſhewn how the influence of hope in general, ſweetens life, and makes our preſent condition ſupportable, if not pleaſing; but a religious hope has ſtill greater advantages. It does not only bear up the mind under her ſufferings, but makes her rejoice in them, as they may be the inſtruments of procuring her the great and ultimate end of all her hope.

Religious hope has likewiſe this advantage above any other kind of hope, that it is able to revive the dying man, and to fill his mind not only with ſecret comfort and refreſhment, but ſometimes with rapture and tranſport. He triumphs in his agonies, whilſt the ſoul ſprings forward with delight, to the great object which he has always had in view, and leaves the body with an expectation of being reunited to her, in a glorious and joyful reſurrection.

I ſhall conclude this eſſay, with thoſe emphatical expreſſions of a lively hope, which the pſalmiſt made uſe of in the midſt of thoſe dangers and adverſities which ſurrounded him; for the following paſſage had its preſent and perſonal, as well as its future and prophetic ſenſe. 'I have ſet the Lord always before me:

'becauſe

'because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. 'Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: 'my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not 'leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine 'holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the 'path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy, at 'thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' C.

Τȣ μεν γαρ γενος εσμεν——

'SIR, TO THE SPECTATOR.

'IT has been usual to remind persons of rank, on 'great occasions in life, of their race and quality, 'and to what expectations they were born; that by 'considering what is worthy of them, they may be 'withdrawn from mean pursuits, and encouraged to 'laudable undertakings. This is turning nobility into 'a principle of virtue, and making it productive of 'merit, as it is understood, to have been originally a 'reward of it.

'It is for the like reason, I imagine, that you have 'in some of your speculations, asserted to your readers, 'the dignity of human nature. But you cannot be 'insensible, that this is a controverted doctrine; there 'are authors who consider human nature in a very 'different view, and books of maxims have been 'written to shew the falsity of all human virtues. The 'reflections which are made on this subject usually take 'some tincture from the tempers and characters of 'those that make them. Politicians can resolve the 'most shining actions among men, into artifice and 'design; others, who are soured by discontent, repulses, 'or ill usage, are apt to mistake their spleen for phi-'losophy, men of profligate lives, and such as find 'themselves incapable of rising to any distinction, 'among their fellow-creatures, are for pulling down 'all appearances of merit, which seem to upbraid them; 'and satirists describe nothing but deformity. From 'all these hands, we have such drafts of mankind, as

'are

'are repreſented in thoſe burleſque pictures, which 'the Indians call Caracaturas; where the art conſiſts 'in preſerving, amidſt diſtorted proportions and aggra-'vated features, ſome diſtinguiſhing likeneſs of the 'perſon, but in ſuch a manner, as to transform the 'moſt agreeable beauty, into the moſt odious monſter.

'It is very diſingenuous to level the beſt of mankind 'with the worſt, and for the faults of particulars to 'degrade the whole ſpecies. Such methods tend not 'only to remove a man's good opinion of others, but 'to deſtroy that reverence for himſelf, which is a great 'guard of innocence, and a ſpring of virtue.

'It is true indeed, that there are ſurpriſing mixtures 'of beauty and deformity, of wiſdom and folly, virtue 'and vice, in the human make; ſuch a diſparity is 'found among numbers of the ſame kind, and every 'individual, in ſome inſtances, or at ſome times, is ſo 'unequal to himſelf, that man ſeems to be the moſt 'wavering and inconſiſtent being in the whole creation. 'So that the queſtion in morality, concerning the dig-'nity of our nature, may at firſt ſight appear 'like ſome difficult queſtions in natural philoſophy, in 'which the arguments on both ſides, ſeem to be of 'equal ſtrength. But as I began with conſidering this 'point as it relates to action, I ſhall here borrow an 'admirable reflection from Monſieur Paſcal, which I 'think ſets it in its proper light.

"It is of dangerous conſequence," ſays he, "to "repreſent to man, how near he is to the level of beaſts, "without ſhewing him at the ſame time his greatneſs. "It is likewiſe dangerous to let him ſee his greatneſs, "without his meanneſs. It is more dangerous yet, to "leave him ignorant of either; but very beneficial that "he ſhould be made ſenſible of both." Whatever im-'perfections we may have in our nature, it is the bu-'ſineſs of religion and virtue, to rectify them, as 'far as is conſiſtent with our preſent ſtate. In the 'mean time, it is no ſmall encouragement to generous 'minds to conſider that we ſhall put them all off with

'our

'our mortality. That ſublime manner of ſalutation
'with which the Jews approached their kings,
"O King, live for ever!"
'may be addreſſed to the loweſt and moſt deſpiſed mor-
'tal among us, under all the infirmities and diſtreſſes,
'with which we ſee him ſurrounded. And whoever
'believes the immortality of the ſoul, will not need a
'better argument for the dignity of his nature, nor a
'ſtronger incitement to actions ſuitable to it.

'I am naturally led by this reflection, to a ſubject I
'have already touched upon in a former letter, and
'cannot, without pleaſure, call to mind the thoughts
'of Cicero, to this purpoſe, in the cloſe of his book
'concerning old age. Every one who is acquainted
'with his writings, will remember, that the elder
'Cato is introduced in that diſcourſe as the ſpeaker,
'and Scipio and Lelius as his auditors. This venera-
'ble perſon is repreſented looking forward, as it were
'from the verge of extreme old age, into a future ſtate,
'and riſing into a contemplation, on the unperiſhable
'part of his nature, and its exiſtence after death. I
'ſhall collect part of his diſcourſe. And as you have
'formerly offered ſome arguments for the ſoul's immor-
'tality, agreeable both to reaſon and chriſtian doctrine,
'I believe your readers will not be diſpleaſed to ſee how
'the ſame great truth ſhines in the pomp of Roman
'eloquence.

"This, ſays Cato, is my firm perſuaſion, that ſince
"the human ſoul exerts itſelf with ſo great activity,
"ſince it has ſuch a reſemblance of the paſt, ſuch a
"concern for the future, ſince it is enriched with ſo
"many arts, ſciences, and diſcoveries, it is impoſſible
"but the Being which contains all theſe muſt be im-
"mortal."

'The elder Cyrus, juſt before his death, is repre-
'ſented by Xenophon ſpeaking after this manner:'
"Think not, my deareſt children, that when I depart
"from you I ſhall be no more, but remember, that my
"ſoul, even while I lived among you, was inviſible to
"you;

" you; yet by my actions, you were ſenſible it exiſted
" in this body. Believe it therefore exiſting ſtill,
" though it be ſtill unſeen. How quickly would the
" honours of illuſtrious men periſh after death, if their
" ſouls performed nothing to preſerve their fame?
" For my own part, I could never think that the ſoul,
" while in a mortal body, lives; but when departed
" out of it, dies; or that his conſciouſneſs is loſt, when
" it is diſcharged out of an unconſcious habitation.
" But when it is freed from all corporeal alliance, then
" it truly exiſts. Further, ſince the human frame is
" broken by death, tell us what becomes of its parts?
" It is viſible, whither the materials of other beings
" are tranſlated, namely, to the ſource from whence
" they had their birth. The ſoul alone, neither pre-
" ſent nor departed, is the object of our eyes." Thus
' Cyrus. But to proceed.' " No one ſhall perſuade me
" Scipio, that your worthy father, or your grand-fa-
" thers Paulus and Africanus, or Africanus his father,
" or uncle, or many other excellent men whom I need not
" name, performed ſo many actions to be remembered by
" poſterity, without being ſenſible that futurity was their
" right. And, if I may be allowed an old man's pri-
" vilege, to ſpeak for myſelf, do you think I would
" have endured the fatigue of ſo many weariſome days
" and nights, both at home and abroad, if I imagined
" that the ſame boundary which is ſet to my life, muſt
" terminate my glory? Were it not more deſirable, to
" have worn out my days in eaſe and tranquillity, free
" from labour and without emulation? But I know
" not how, my ſoul has always raiſed itſelf, and look-
" ed forward on futurity, in this view and expectation,
" that when it ſhall depart out of life, it ſhall then
" live for ever; and, if this were not true, that the
" mind is immortal, the ſouls of the moſt worthy
" would not, above all others, have the ſtrongeſt im-
" pulſe to glory.

" What beſides this is the cauſe, that the wiſeſt
" men, die with the greateſt equanimity, the ignorant

" with the greateſt concern? Does it not ſeem, that " thoſe minds which have the moſt extenſive views, " foreſee they are removing to a happier condition, " which thoſe of a narrower ſight do not perceive? " I, for my part, am tranſported with the hope of " ſeeing your anceſtors, whom I have honoured and " loved, and am earneſtly deſirous of meeting, not only " thoſe excellent perſons, whom I have known, but " thoſe too of whom I have heard and read, and of " whom I myſelf have written; nor would I be de- " tained from ſo pleaſing a journey. O happy day, " when I ſhall eſcape from this crowd, this heap of " pollution, and be admitted to that divine aſſembly, " of exalted ſpirits! When I ſhall not only go to " thoſe great perſons I have named, but to my Cato, " my ſon, than whom, a better man was never born, " and whoſe funeral rites I myſelf performed, whereas " he ought rather to have attended mine. Yet has " not his ſoul deſerted me, but ſeeming to caſt back a " look on me, is gone before to thoſe habitations, to " which it was ſenſible I ſhould follow him. And " though I might appear to have borne my loſs with " courage, I was not unaffected with it, but I com- " forted myſelf in the aſſurance, that it would not be " long before we ſhould meet again, and be divorced " no more."

'I am, Sir, &c.'

——Nec morti eſt locum—— VIRG.

A LEWD young fellow, ſeeing an aged hermit go by him barefooted, 'father,' ſays he, 'you are 'in a very miſerable condition, if there is not another 'world.' 'True, ſon,' ſaid the hermit; 'but what 'is thy condition if there is?' Man is a creature, deſigned for two different ſtates of being, or rather for two different lives. His firſt life is ſhort and tranſient; his ſecond, permanent and laſting. The queſtion we are all concerned in is this:—In which of theſe two lives it is our chief intereſt to make ourſelves happy? Or, in other words, whether we ſhould endeavour to ſecure

to

to ourſelves, the pleaſures and gratifications of a life which is uncertain and precarious, and at its utmoſt length, of a very inconſiderable duration; or to ſecure to ourſelves the pleaſures of a life which is fixed and ſettled, and will never end? Every man, upon the firſt hearing of this queſtion, knows very well which ſide of it he ought to cloſe with. But however right we are in theory, it is plain, that in practice we adhere to the wrong ſide of the queſtion. We make proviſions for this life, as though it were never to have an end, and for the other life, as though it were never to have a beginning.

Should a ſpirit of ſuperior rank, who is a ſtranger to human nature, accidentally alight upon the earth, and take a ſurvey of its inhabitants; what would his notions of us be? Would not he think, that we are a ſpecies of beings, made for quite different ends and purpoſes, than what we really are? Muſt not he imagine, that we were placed in this world, to get riches and honours? Would not he think, that it was our duty to toil after wealth, and ſtation, and title? Nay, would not he believe, we were forbidden poverty, by threats of eternal puniſhment, and enjoined to purſue our pleaſures under pain of damnation? He would certainly imagine, that we were influenced by a ſcheme of duties, quite oppoſite to thoſe which are indeed preſcribed to us. And truly, according to ſuch an imagination, he muſt conclude that we are a ſpecies of the moſt obedient creatures in the univerſe; that we are conſtant to our duty, and that we keep a ſteady eye on the end, for which we were ſent hither.

But how great would be his aſtoniſhment, when he learnt that we were beings, not deſigned to exiſt in this world above threeſcore and ten years! and that the greateſt part of this buſy ſpecies, fall ſhort even of that age? How would he be loſt in horror and admiration, when he ſhould know that this ſet of creatures, who lay out all their endeavours for this life, which ſcarce deſerves the name of exiſtence, when, I ſay, he ſhould

know, that this ſet of creatures are to exiſt to all eternity, in another life, for which they make no preparations? Nothing can be a greater diſgrace to reaſon, than that men, who are perſuaded of theſe two different ſtates of being, ſhould be perpetually employed in providing for a life of threeſcore and ten years, and neglecting to make proviſion for that, which after many myriads of years, will be ſtill new, and ſtill beginning; eſpecially when we conſider, that our endeavours for making ourſelves great, or rich, or honourable, or whatever elſe we place our happineſs in, may, after all, prove unſucceſsful; whereas, if we conſtantly and ſincerely endeavour, to make ourſelves happy in the other life, we are ſure that our endeavours will ſucceed, and that we ſhall not be diſappointed of our hope.

The following queſtion is ſtarted by one of the ſchoolmen. Suppoſing the whole body of the earth were a great ball or maſs of the fineſt ſand, and that a ſingle grain or particle of this ſand, ſhould be annihilated every thouſand years. Suppoſing then, that you had it in your choice to be happy, all the while this prodigious maſs of ſand was conſuming, by this ſlow method, till there was not a grain of it left, on condition you were to be miſerable for ever after; or, ſuppoſing that you might be happy for ever after, on condition, you would be miſerable till the whole maſs of ſand was thus annihilated, at the rate of one grain in a thouſand years: which of theſe two caſes would you make your choice?

It muſt be confeſſed in this caſe, ſo many thouſands of years are to the imagination as a kind of eternity, though in reality they do not bear ſo great a proportion to that duration which is to follow them, as an unit does to the greateſt number which you can put together in figures, or as one of thoſe ſands to the ſuppoſed heap. Reaſon therefore tells us, without any manner of heſitation, which would be the better part of this choice. However, as I have before intimated, our reaſon might, in ſuch a caſe, be ſo overſet by the imagination

gination, as to diſpoſe ſome perſons to ſink under the conſideration of the great length of the firſt part of this duration, and of the great diſtance of that ſecond duration, which is to ſucceed it. The mind, I ſay, might give itſelf up to that happineſs which is at hand, conſidering that it is ſo very near, and that it would laſt ſo very long. But when the choice we actually have before us is this; whether we ſhall chooſe to be happy, for the ſpace only of threeſcore and ten, nay perhaps only of twenty or ten years, I might ſay only of a day or an hour, and miſerable to all eternity; or, on the contrary, miſerable for this ſhort term of years, and happy for a whole eternity: what words are ſufficient to expreſs that folly, and want of conſideration, which, in ſuch a caſe, makes a wrong choice?

I here put the caſe even at the worſt, by ſuppoſing (what ſeldom happens) that a courſe of virtue makes us miſerable in this life: but if we ſuppoſe (as it generally happens) that virtue would make us more happy even in this life, than a contrary courſe of vice; how can we ſufficiently admire, the ſtupidity or madneſs of thoſe perſons, who are capable of making ſo abſurd a choice?

Every wiſe man, therefore, will conſider this life, only as it may conduce to the happineſs of the other, and cheerfully ſacrifice the pleaſures of a few years, to thoſe of an eternity.

Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum. HOR.

'MR. SPECTATOR,

'THERE are none of your ſpeculations which 'pleaſe me more, than thoſe upon infinitude and 'eternity. You have already conſidered that part of 'eternity which is paſt, and I wiſh you would give us 'your thoughts upon that which is to come.

'Your readers will, perhaps, receive greater plea-'ſure with this view of eternity, than the former, 'ſince we have every one of us a concern in that 'which is to come: whereas a ſpeculation on that 'which is paſt, is rather curious than uſeful.

'Beſides, we can eaſily conceive it poſſible for ſucceſſive duration, never to have an end; though as you have juſtly obſerved, that eternity which never had a beginning, is altogether incomprehenſible: that is, we can conceive an eternal duration, which may be, though we cannot an eternal duration which hath been; or, if I may uſe the philoſophical terms, we may apprehend a potential, though not an actual eternity.

'This notion of a future eternity, which is natural to the mind of man, is an unanſwerable argument that he is a being deſigned for it; eſpecially if we conſider that he is capable of being virtuous or vicious here; that he hath faculties improveable to all eternity; and by a proper or wrong employment of them, may be happy or miſerable, throughout that infinite duration. Our idea, indeed, of this eternity, is not of an adequate or fixed nature, but is perpetually growing and enlarging itſelf toward the object which is too big for human comprehenſion. As we are now in the beginning of exiſtence, ſo ſhall we always appear to ourſelves, as if we were for ever entering upon it. After a million or two of centuries, ſome conſiderable things already paſt, may ſlip out of our memory; which, if it be not ſtrengthened in a wonderful manner, may poſſibly forget that there ever was a ſun or planets. And yet, notwithſtanding the long race that we ſhall then have run, and ſhall ſtill imagine ourſelves juſt ſtarting from the goal, and find no proportion between that ſpace, which we know had a beginning, and what we are ſure never will have an end.'

Sentio Te ſedem Hominum ac domum contemplari, quæ ſi tibi parva (ut eſt) ita videtur, hæc cœleſtia ſemper ſpectato; illa humana contemni o-

CICERO Somn. Scip.

THE following Eſſay comes from the ingenious author of the letter upon Novelty, printed in a late Spectator: The notions are drawn from the Platonic way of thinking, but as they contribute to raiſe the

the mind, and may inſpire noble ſentiments of our own future grandeur and happineſs, I think it well deſerves to be preſented to the public.

If the univerſe be the creature of an intelligent mind, this mind could have no immediate regard to himſelf in producing it. He needed not to make trial of his omnipotence, to be informed what effects were within its reach: the world, as exiſting in his eternal idea, was then as beautiful as now it is drawn forth into being; and in the immenſe abyſs of his eſſence, are contained far brighter ſcenes than will be ever ſet forth to view; it being impoſſible that the great Author of Nature ſhould bound his own power, by giving exiſtence to a ſyſtem of creatures ſo perfect, that he cannot improve upon it by any other exertions of his Almighty will. Between finite and infinite there is an unmeaſurable interval, not to be filled up in endleſs ages; for which reaſon, the moſt excellent of all God's works muſt be equally ſhort of what his power is able to produce as the moſt imperfect, and may be exceeded with the ſame eaſe.

This thought hath made ſome imagine, (what it muſt be confeſſed is not impoſſible) that the unfathomed ſpace is ever teeming with new births, the younger ſtill inheriting a greater perfection than the elder. But as this doth not fall within my preſent view, I ſhall content myſelf with taking notice, that the conſideration now mentioned proves undeniably, that the ideal worlds in the divine underſtanding yield a proſpect incomparably more ample, various and delightful than any created world can do: and that therefore, as it is not to be ſuppoſed that God ſhould make a world merely of inanimate matter, however diverſified; or inhabited only by creatures of no higher an order than brutes; ſo the end for which he deſigned his reaſonable offſpring is the contemplation of his works, the enjoyment of himſelf, and in both to be happy, having to this purpoſe endowed them with correſpondent faculties and deſires. He can have no greater pleaſure from a bare review of his works,

works, than from the ſurvey of his own ideas; but we may be aſſured that he is well pleaſed in the ſatisfaction derived to Beings capable of it, and for whoſe entertainment he hath erected this immenſe theatre. Is not this more than an intimation of our immortality? Man, who when conſidered as on his probation for a happy exiſtence hereafter, is the moſt remarkble inſtance of Divine wiſdom; if we cut him off from all relation to Eternity, is the moſt wonderful and unaccountable compoſition in the whole creation. He hath capacities to lodge a much greater variety of knowledge than he will be ever maſter of, and an unſatisfied curioſity to tread the ſecret paths of nature and providence: but, with this, his organs, in their preſent ſtructure, are rather fitted to ſerve the neceſſities of a vile body, than to miniſter to his underſtanding; and from the little ſpot to which he is chained, he can frame but wandering gueſſes concerning the innumerable worlds of light that encompaſs him, which though in themſelves of a prodigious bigneſs, do but juſt glimmer in the remote parts of the heavens; and when with a great deal of time and pains he hath laboured a little way up the ſteep aſcent of truth, and beholds with pity the groveling multitude beneath, in a moment his foot ſlides, and he tumbles down headlong into the grave.

Thinking on this, I am obliged to believe, in juſtice to the Creator of the world, that there is another ſtate, where man ſhall be better ſituated for contemplation, or rather have it in his power to remove from object to object, and from world to world! and be accommodated with ſenſes, and other helps, for making the quickeſt and moſt amazing diſcoveries. How doth ſuch a genius as Sir Iſaac Newton, from amidſt the darkneſs that involves human underſtanding, break forth, and appear like one of another ſpecies! The vaſt machine we inhabit lies open to him; he ſeems not unacquainted with the general laws that govern it; and while with the tranſport of a philoſopher he beholds and admires the glorious work, he is capable of paying at once a more devout

and

and more rational homage to his maker. But alas! how narrow is the proſpect even of ſuch a mind! And how obſcure to the compaſs that is taken in by the ken of an Angel! or of a ſoul but newly eſcaped from its impriſonment in the body! For my part, I freely indulge my ſoul in the confidence of its future grandeur: it pleaſes me to think that I, who know ſo ſmall a portion of the works of the Creator, and with ſlow and painful ſteps creep up and down on the ſurface of this globe, ſhall ere long ſhoot away with the ſwiftneſs of imagination, trace out the hidden ſprings of nature's operation, be able to keep pace with the heavenly bodies in the rapidity of their career, be a ſpectator of the long chain of events in the natural and moral worlds, viſit the ſeveral apartments of the creation, know how they are furniſhed, and how inhabited, comprehend the order, and meaſure the magnitudes and diſtances of thoſe orbs which to us ſeem diſpoſed without any regular deſign, and ſet all in the ſame circle; obſerve the dependance of the parts of each ſyſtem, and (if our minds are big enough to graſp the theory) of the ſeveral ſyſtems upon one another, from whence reſults the harmony of the univerſe. In eternity a great deal may be done of this kind. I find it of uſe to cheriſh this generous ambition; for beſides the ſecret refreſhment it diffuſes through my ſoul, it engages me in an endeavour to improve my faculties, as as well as to exerciſe them conformably to the rank I now hold among reaſonable Beings, and the hope I have of being once advanced to a more exalted ſtation.

The other, and that the ultimate end of man, is the enjoyment of God, beyond which he cannot form a wiſh. Dim at beſt are the conceptions we have of the Supreme Being, who, as it were, keeps his creatures in ſuſpenſe, neither diſcovering, nor hiding himſelf; by which means the Libertine hath a handle to diſpute his exiſtence, while the moſt are content to ſpeak him fair, but in their hearts prefer every trifling ſatisfaction to the favour of their Maker, and ridicule the good man for the ſingularity of his choice. Will there not a time come,

when

when the Free-thinker ſhall ſee his impious ſchemes overturned, and be made a convert to the truths he hates; when deluded mortals ſhall be convinced of the folly of their purſuits, and the few wiſe who followed the guidance of Heaven, and ſcorning the blandiſhments of ſenſe, and the ſordid bribery of the world, aſpired to a celeſtial abode, ſhall ſtand poſſeſſed of their utmoſt wiſh in the viſion of the Creator? Here the mind heaves a thought now and then towards him, and hath ſome tranſient glances of his preſence: when in the inſtant it thinks itſelf to have the faſteſt hold, the object eludes its expectations, and it falls back tired and baffled to the ground. Doubtleſs there is ſome more perfect way of converſing with heavenly beings. Are not ſpirits capable of mutual intelligence, unleſs immerſed in bodies or by their intervention? Muſt ſuperior natures depend on inferior for the main privilege of ſociable beings, that of converſing with them, and knowing each other? What would they have done, had matter never been created? I ſuppoſe, not have lived in eternal ſolitude. As incorporeal ſubſtances are of a nobler order, ſo be ſure their manner of intercourſe is anſwerably more expedite and intimate. This method of communication, we call intellectual viſion, as ſomewhat analogous to the ſenſe of ſeeing, which is the medium of our acquaintance with this viſible world. And in ſome ſuch way can God make himſelf the object of immediate intuition to the bleſſed; and as he can, it is not improbable that he will, always condeſcending, in the circumſtances of doing it, to the weakneſs and proportion of finite minds. His works but faintly reflect the image of his perfections, it is a ſecond-hand knowledge: to have a juſt idea of him, it may be neceſſary that we ſee him as he is. But what is that? It is ſomething, that never entered into the heart of man to conceive; yet, what we can eaſily conceive, will be a fountain of unſpeakable, of everlaſting rapture. All created glories will fade and die away in his preſence. Perhaps it will be my happineſs to compare the world with the fair exemplar

emplar of it in the divine mind; perhaps, to view the original plan of thoſe wiſe deſigns that have been executing in a long ſucceſſion of ages. Thus employed in finding out his works, and contemplating their author, how ſhall I fall proſtrate and adoring, my body ſwallowed up in the immenſity of matter, my mind in the infinity of his perfections.

Multa putans, ſortemque animo miſeratus iniquam. VIRG.

IN compaſſion to thoſe gloomy mortals, who, by their unbelief, are rendered incapable of feeling thoſe impreſſions of joy and hope, which the celebration of the late glorious Eaſter feſtival naturally leaves on the mind of a chriſtian, I ſhall in this paper endeavour to evince, that there are grounds to expect a future ſtate, without ſuppoſing in the reader any faith at all, not even the belief of a Deity. Let the moſt ſtedfaſt unbeliever open his eyes, and take a ſurvey of the ſenſible world, and then ſay if there be not a connection, and adjuſtment, an exact and conſtant order diſcoverable in all the parts of it. Whatever be the cauſe, the thing itſelf is evident to all our faculties. Look into the animal ſyſtem, the paſſions, ſenſes, and locomotive powers; is not the like contrivance and propriety obſervable in theſe too? Are they not fitted to certain ends, and are they not by nature directed to proper objects?

Is it poſſible then that the ſmalleſt bodies ſhould, by a management ſuperior to the wit of man, be diſpoſed in the moſt excellent manner agreeble to their reſpective natures; and yet the ſpirits or ſouls of men be neglected, or managed by ſuch rules as fall ſhort of man's underſtanding: Shall every other paſſion be rightly placed by nature, and ſhall that appetite of immortality, natural to all mankind, be alone diſplaced, or deſigned to be fruſtrated? Shall the induſtrious application of the inferior animal powers, in the meaneſt vocations, be anſwered by the ends we propoſe, and ſhall not the generous efforts of a virtuous mind be rewarded? In a word, ſhall the corporeal world be all order and harmony, the intellectual all diſcord and confuſion? He, who is bigot enough to believe

lieve theſe things, muſt bid adieu to that natural rule of reaſoning from analogy; muſt run counter to that maxim of common ſenſe, 'That men ought to form their judg-'ments of things unexperienced from that they have ex-'perienced.'

If any thing looks like a recompence of calamitous virtue on this ſide the grave, it is, either an aſſurance that thereby we obtain the favour and protection of heaven, and ſhall, whatever befals us in this, in another life meet with a juſt return, or elſe that applauſe and reputation, which is thought to attend virtuous actions. The former of theſe, our freethinkers, out of their ſingular wiſdom and benevolence to mankind, endeavoured to eraſe from the minds of men. The latter can never be juſtly diſtributed in this life, where ſo many ill actions are reputable, and ſo many good actions diſeſteemed or miſinterpreted; where ſubtle hypocriſy is placed in the moſt engaging light, and modeſt virtue lies concealed; where the heart and the ſoul are hid from the eyes of men, and the eyes of men are dimned and vitiated. Plato's ſenſe in relation to this point is contained in his Georgias, where he introduces Socrates ſpeaking after this manner.

'It was in the reign of Saturn provided by a law, which 'the gods have ſince continued down to this time, That 'they who had lived virtuouſly and piouſly upon earth, 'ſhould after death enjoy a life full of happineſs, in cer-'tain iſlands appointed for the habitation of the bleſſed: 'but that ſuch as had lived wickedly, ſhould go into the 'receptacle of damned ſouls, named Tartarus, there to 'ſuffer the puniſhments they deſerved. But in all the 'reign of Saturn, and in the beginning of the reign of 'Jove, living judges were appointed, by whom each per-'ſon was judged in his life-time in the ſame day on 'which he was to die. The conſequence of which was, 'that they often paſſed wrong judgments. Pluto, there-'fore, who preſided in Tartarus, and the guardians of the 'Bleſſed Iſlands, finding that, on the other ſide, many 'unfit perſons were ſent to their reſpective dominions, 'complained to Jove, who promiſed to redreſs the evil.

'He

'He added, the reaſon of theſe unjuſt proceedings is, that 'men are judged in the body. Hence many conceal the 'blemiſhes and imperfections of their minds by beauty, 'birth and riches; not to mention, that at the time of 'trial there are crowds of witneſſes to atteſt their having 'lived well. Theſe things miſlead the judges, who be-'ing themſelves alſo of the number of the living, are 'ſurrounded each with his own body, as with a veil 'thrown over his mind. For the future, therefore, it 'is my intention that men do not come on their trial till 'after death, when they ſhall appear before the judge, 'diſrobed of all their corporeal ornaments. The judge 'himſelf too ſhall be a pure unveiled ſpirit, beholding 'the very ſoul, the naked ſoul of the party before him. 'With this view I have already conſtituted my ſons, 'Monos and Rhadamanthus, judges, who are natives of 'Aſia; and Æacus, a native of Europe. Theſe, after 'death, ſhall hold their court in a certain meadow, from 'which there are two roads, leading the one to Tartarus, 'the other to the Iſlands of the Bleſſed.'

From this, as from numberleſs other paſſages of his writings, may be ſeen Plato's opinion of a future ſtate. A thing, therefore, in regard to us ſo comfortable, in itſelf ſo juſt and excellent, a thing ſo agreeable to the analogy of nature, and ſo univerſally credited by all orders and ranks of men, of all nations and ages, what is it that ſhould move a few men to reject? Surely there muſt be ſomething of prejudice in the caſe. I appeal to the ſecret thoughts of a freethinker, if he does nor argue within himſelf after this manner: The ſenſes and faculties I enjoy at preſent are viſibly deſigned to repair, or preſerve the body from the injuries it is liable to in its preſent circumſtances. But in an eternal ſtate, where no decays are to be repaired, no outward injuries to be fenced againſt, where there are no fleſh and bones, nerves or blood-veſſels, there will certainly be none of the ſenſes; and that there ſhould be a ſtate of life without the ſenſes is inconceivable.

But as this manner of reaſoning proceeds from a po-

verty of imagination, and narrowneſs of ſoul in thoſe that uſe it, I ſhall endeavour to remedy thoſe defects, and open their views, by laying before them a caſe which, being naturally poſſible, may, perhaps, reconcile them to the belief of what is ſupernaturally revealed.

Let us ſuppoſe a perſon blind and deaf from his birth, who being grown to man's eſtate, is by the dead-palſy, or ſome other cauſe, deprived of his feeling, taſting, and ſmelling; and at the ſame time has the impediment of his hearing removed, and the film taken from his eyes: What the five ſenſes are to us, that the touch, taſte, and ſmell were to him. And any other ways of perception of a more refined and extenſive nature were to him as inconceivable, as to us thoſe are which will one day be adapted to perceive thoſe things which eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. And it would be juſt as reaſonable in him to conclude, that the loſs of thoſe three ſenſes could not poſſibly be ſucceeded by any new inlets of perception; as in a modern freethinker to imagine there can be no ſtate of life and perception without the ſenſes he enjoys at preſent. Let us further ſuppoſe the ſame perſon's eyes, at their firſt opening, to be ſtruck with a great variety of the moſt gay and pleaſing objects, and his ears with a melodious concert of vocal and inſtrumental muſic. Behold him amazed, raviſhed, tranſported; and you have ſome diſtant repreſentation, ſome faint and glimmering idea of the ecſtatic ſtate of the ſoul in that article in which ſhe emerges from this ſepulchre of fleſh into life and immortality.

Igneus eſt ollis vigor, & cœleſtis origo
Seminibus----- VIRG.

THE ſame faculty of reaſon and underſtanding, which placeth us above the brute part of the creation, doth alſo ſubject our minds to greater and more manifold diſquiets than creatures of an inferior rank are ſenſible of. It is by this that we anticipate future diſaſters, and oft create to ourſelves real pain from imaginary evils, as well as multiply the pangs ariſing from thoſe which cannot be avoided. It

It behoves us, therefore, to make the beſt uſe of that ſublime talent, which, ſo long as it continues the inſtrument of paſſion, will ſerve only to make us more miſerable, in proportion as we are more excellent than other beings.

It is the privilege of a thinking being to withdraw from the objects that ſolicit his ſenſes, and turn his thoughts inward on himſelf. For my own part, I often mitigate the pain ariſing from the little misfortunes and diſappointments that chequer human life by this introverſion of my faculties, wherein I regard my own ſoul as the image of her Creator, and receive great conſolation from beholding thoſe perfections which teſtify her divine original, and lead me into ſome knowledge of her everlaſting Archetype.

But there is not any property or circumſtance of my being that I contemplate with more joy than my immortality. I can eaſily overlook any preſent momentary ſorrow, when I reflect that it is in my power to be happy a thouſand years hence. If it were not for this thought, I had rather be an oyſter than a man, the moſt ſtupid and ſenſeleſs of animals than a reaſonable mind tortured with an extreme innate deſire of that perfection which it deſpairs to obtain.

It is with great pleaſure that I behold inſtinct, reaſon, and faith concurring to atteſt this comfortable truth. It is revealed from heaven, it is diſcovered by philoſophers, and the ignorant, unenlightened part of mankind have a natural propenſity to believe it. It is an agreeable entertainment to reflect on the various ſhapes under which this doctrine has appeared in the world. The Pythagorean tranſmigration, the ſenſual habitations of the Mahometan, and the ſhady realms of Pluto, do all agree in the main points, the continuation of our exiſtence, and the diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments, proportioned to the merits or demerits of men in this life.

But in all theſe ſchemes there is ſomething groſs and improbable, that ſhocks a reaſonable and ſpeculative mind. Whereas nothing can be more rational and ſub-

lime than the chriſtian idea of a future ſtate. Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for thoſe that love him. The abovementioned ſchemes are narrow tranſcripts of our preſent ſtate: but in this indefinite deſcription there is ſomething ineffably great and noble. The mind of man muſt be raiſed to a higher pitch, not only to partake the enjoyments of the Chriſtian Paradiſe, but even to be able to frame any notion of them.

Nevertheleſs, in order to gratify our imagination, and by way of condeſcenſion to our low way of thinking, the ideas of light, glory, a crown, &c. are made uſe of to adumbrate that which we cannot directly underſtand.—'The lamb which is in the midſt of the throne ſhall feed 'them, and ſhall lead them into living fountains of wa-'ters; and God ſhall wipe away all tears from their 'eyes. And there ſhall be no more death, neither ſor-'row, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain; 'for the former things are paſſed away, and behold all 'things are new. There ſhall be no night there, and 'they need no candle, neither light of the ſun: for the 'Lord God giveth them light, and ſhall make them 'drink of the river of his pleaſures: and they ſhall reign 'for ever and ever. They ſhall receive a crown of glory 'which fadeth not away.'

Theſe are chearing reflections: And I have often wondered that men could be found ſo dull and phlegmatic, as to prefer the thought of annihilation before them; or ſo ill-natured, as to endeavour to perſuade mankind to the diſbelief of what is ſo pleaſing and profitable even in the proſpect; or ſo blind, as not to ſee that there is a Deity, and if there be, that this ſcheme of things flows from his attributes, and evidently correſponds with the other parts of his creation.

I know not how to account for this abſurd turn of thought, except it proceed from a want of other employment joined with an affection of ſingularity. I ſhall, therefore, inform our modern freethinkers of two points, whereof

whereof they ſeem to be ignorant. The firſt is, that it is not the being ſingular, but being ſingular for ſomething, that argues either extraordinary endowments of nature, or benevolent intentions to mankind, which draws the admiration and eſteem of the world. A miſtake in this point naturally ariſes from that confuſion of thought which I do not remember to have ſeen ſo great inſtances of in any writers, as in certain modern freethinkers.

The other point is, that there are innumerable objects within the reach of a human mind, and each of theſe objects may be viewed in innumerable lights and poſitions, and the relations ariſing between them are innumerable. There is, therefore, an infinity of things whereon to employ their thoughts, if not with advantage to the world, at leaſt with amuſement to themſelves, and without offence or prejudice to other people. If they proceed to exert their talent of freethinking in this way, they may be innocently dull, and no one take any notice of it. But to ſee men without either wit or argument, pretend to run down divine and human laws, and treat their fellow-ſubjects with contempt for profeſſing a belief of thoſe points on which the preſent as well as future intereſt of mankind depends, is not to be endured. For my own part, I ſhall omit no endeavours to render their perſons as deſpicable, and their practices as odious in the eye of the world, as they deſerve.

SECTION XI.

Death and Judgment.

-----Affiata eſt numine quando
Jam propiore Dei.----- VIRG.

THE following letter comes to me from that excellent man in holy orders, whom I have mentioned more than once as one of that ſociety who aſſiſt me in my ſpeculations. It is a thought in ſickneſs, and of a very ſerious nature, for which reaſon I give it a place in the paper of this day.

'SIR,

'SIR,

'THE indiſpoſition which has long hung upon me, 'is at laſt grown to ſuch a head, that it muſt quickly 'make an end of me, or of itſelf. You may imagine, 'that whilſt I am in this bad ſtate of health, there are 'none of your works which I read with greater pleaſure 'than your Saturday's papers. I ſhould be very glad 'if I could furniſh you with any hints for that day's 'entertainment. Were I able to dreſs up ſeveral thoughts 'of a ſerious nature, which have made great impreſſions 'on my mind during a long fit of ſickneſs, they might 'not be an improper entertainment for that occaſion.

'Among all the reflections which uſually riſe in the 'mind of a weak man, who has time and inclination to 'conſider his approacing end, there is none more natural 'than that of his going to appear naked and unbodied 'before him who made him. When a man conſiders, 'that as ſoon as the vital union is diſſolved, he ſhall ſee 'that Supreme Being whom he now contemplates at a 'diſtance, and only in his works; or, to ſpeak more phi-'loſophically, when by ſome faculty in the ſoul he ſhall 'apprehend the Divine Being, and be more ſenſible of his 'preſence, than we are now of the preſence of any ob-'ject which the eye beholds, a man muſt be loſt in 'careleſſneſs and ſtupidity, who is not alarmed at ſuch 'a thought. Dr. Sherlock, in his excellent treatiſe upon 'death, has repreſented in very ſtrong and lively colours 'the ſtate of the ſoul in its firſt ſeparation from the body, 'with regard to that inviſible world which every where 'ſurrounds us, though we are not able to diſcover it 'through this groſſer world of matter, which is accom-'modated to our ſenſes in this life. His words are as 'follow:

"That death, which is our leaving this world, is no-"thing elſe but our putting off theſe bodies, teaches us, "that it is only our union to theſe bodies, which inter-"cepts the ſight of the other world: The other world is "not at ſuch a diſtance from us as we may imagine; the "throne of God, indeed, is at a great remove from this

"earth,

" earth, above the third heavens, where he diſplays his
" glory to thoſe bleſſed ſpirits which encompaſs his throne;
" but as ſoon as we ſtep out of theſe bodies, we ſtep into
" the other world, which is not ſo properly another
" world, (for there is the ſame heaven and earth ſtill)
" as a new ſtate of life. To live in theſe bodies is to
" live in this world; to live out of them is to remove
" into the next: For while our ſouls are confined to theſe
" bodies, and can look only through theſe material caſe-
" ments, nothing but what is material can affect us; nay,
" nothing but what is ſo groſs, that it can reflect light,
" and convey the ſhapes and colours of things with it
" to the eye: ſo that though within this viſible world
" there be a more glorious ſcene of things than what ap-
" pears to us, we perceive nothing at all of it: for this
" veil of fleſh parts the viſible and inviſible world: But
" when we put off theſe bodies, there are new and ſur-
" priſing wonders preſent themſelves to our views; when
" theſe material ſpectacles are taken off, the ſoul with its
" own naked eyes ſees what was inviſible before; and
" then we are in the other world, when we can ſee it,
" and converſe with it. Thus St. Paul tells us, that
" when we are at home in the body, we are abſent from
" the Lord; but when we are abſent from the body, we
" are preſent with the Lord. 2 Cor. v. 6, 8. And
" methinks this is enough to cure us of our fondneſs for
" theſe bodies, unleſs we think it more deſirable to be
" confined to a priſon, and to look through a grate all
" our lives, which gives us but a very narrow proſpect,
" and that none of the beſt neither, than to be ſet at li-
" berty to view all the glories of the world. What
" would we give now for the leaſt glimpſe of that invi-
" ſible world, which the firſt ſtep we take out of theſe
" bodies will preſent us with? There are ſuch things as
" eye has not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it en-
" tered into the heart of man to conceive: Death opens
" our eyes, enlarges our proſpect, preſents us with a
" new and more glorious world, which we can never
" ſee while we are ſhut up in fleſh; which ſhould make

" us

" us as willing to part with this veil, as to take the
" film off our eyes, which hinders our ſight."

'As a thinking man cannot but be very much af-
'fected with the idea of his appearing in the preſence of
'that Being, whom none can ſee and live; he muſt be
'much more affected when he conſiders that this Being
'whom he appears before, will examine all the actions of
'his paſt life, and reward or puniſh him accordingly. I
'muſt confeſs that I think there is no ſcheme of religion,
'beſides that of chriſtianity, which can poſſibly ſupport
'the moſt virtuous perſon under this thought. Let a
'man's innocence be what it will, let his virtues riſe to
'the higheſt pitch of perfection attainable in this life,
'there will be ſtill in him ſo many ſecret ſins, ſo many
'human frailties, ſo many offences of ignorance, paſſion
'and prejudice, ſo many unguarded words and thoughts,
'and, in ſhort, ſo many defects in his beſt actions,
'that without the advantages of ſuch an expiation and
'atonement as chriſtianity has revealed to us, it is im-
'poſſible that he ſhould be cleared before his Sovereign
'Judge, or that he ſhould be able to ſtand in his ſight.
'Our holy religion ſuggeſts to us the only means where-
'by our guilt may be taken away, and our imperfect
'obedience accepted.

'It is this ſeries of thought that I have endeavoured
'to expreſs in the following hymn, which I have com-
'compoſed during this my ſickneſs.'

I.

When riſing from the bed of death,
O'erwhelm'd with guilt and fear,
I ſee my Maker face to face,
O how ſhall I appear!

II.

If yet, while pardon may be found,
And mercy may be ſought,
My heart with inward horror ſhrinks,
And trembles at the thought;

III.

When thou, O Lord, ſhalt ſtand diſclos'd,
In Majeſty ſevere,
And ſit in judgment on my ſoul,
O how ſhall I appear!

IV.

But thou haſt told the troubled mind,
Who does her ſins lament,
The timely tribute of her tears
Shall endleſs woe prevent.

V.

Then ſee the ſorrows of my heart,
Ere yet it be too late,
And hear my Saviour's dying groans,
To give thoſe ſorrows weight.

VI.

For never ſhall my ſoul deſpair,
Her pardon to procure,
Who knows thy only Son has dy'd
To make her pardon ſure.

-----Animæque capaces
Mortis-----. LUCAN.

THE proſpect of death is ſo gloomy and diſmal, that if it were conſtantly before our eyes, it would imbitter all the ſweets of life. The gracious Author of our being hath, therefore, ſo formed us, that we are capable of many pleaſing ſenſations and reflections, and meet with ſo many amuſements and ſolicitudes, as divert our thoughts from dwelling upon an evil, which, by reaſon of its ſeeming diſtance, makes but languid impreſſions upon the mind. But how diſtant ſoever the time of our death may be, ſince it is certain that we muſt die, it is neceſſary to allot ſome portion of our life to conſider the end of it; and it is highly convenient to fix ſome ſtated times to meditate upon the final period of our exiſtence here. The principle of ſelf-love, as we are men, will make us inquire, what is like to become of us after our diſſolution: and our conſcience, as we are chriſtians, will inform us, that according to the good or evil of our actions here, we ſhall be tranſlated to the manſions of eternal bliſs or miſery. When this is ſeriouſly weighed, we muſt think it madneſs to be unprepared againſt the black moment; but when we reflect that, perhaps, that black moment may be to-night, how watchful ought we to be!

I was wonderfully affected with a diſcourſe I had lately

lately with a clergyman of my acquaintance upon this head, which was to this effect: 'The conſideration,' ſaid the good man, 'that my being is precarious, moved 'me many years ago to make a reſolution, which I have 'diligently kept, and to which I owe the greateſt ſa-'tisfaction that a mortal man can enjoy. Every night 'before I addreſs myſelf in private to my Creator, I 'lay my hand upon my heart, and aſk myſelf, Whether 'if God ſhould require my ſoul of me this night, I 'could hope for mercy from him? The bitter agonies 'I underwent, in this my firſt acquaintance with my-'ſelf, were ſo far from throwing me into deſpair of that 'mercy which is over all God's works, that they rather 'proved motives to greater circumſpection in my future 'conduct. The oftener I exerciſed myſelf in mediations 'of this kind, the leſs was my anxiety; and by making 'the thoughts of death familiar, what was at firſt ſo 'terrible and ſhocking is become the ſweeteſt of my en-'joyments. Theſe contemplations have indeed made me 'ſerious, but not ſullen; nay, they are ſo far from hav-'ing ſoured my temper, that as I have a mind perfectly 'compoſed, and a ſecret ſpring of joy in my heart, ſo my 'converſation is pleaſant, and my countenance ſerene. 'I taſte all the innocent ſatisfactions of life pure and 'ſincere; I have no ſhare in pleaſures that leave a ſting 'behind them, nor am cheated with that kind of mirth, 'in the midſt of which there is heavineſs.'

Quiſque ſuos patimur manes.----- VIRG.

MR. IRONSIDE,

THE following letter was really written by a young gentleman in a languiſhing illneſs; which both himſelf, and thoſe who attended him, thought it impoſſible for him to outlive. If you think ſuch an image of the ſtate of a man's mind in that circumſtance be worth publiſhing, it is at your ſervice, and take it as follows:

'DEAR SIR,

'You formerly obſerved to me, that nothing made a 'more

'more ridiculous figure in a man's life, than the diſparity 'we often find in him ſick and well. Thus one of an 'unfortunate conſtitution is perpetually exhibiting a mi-'ſerable example of the weakneſs of his mind, or of his 'body, in their turns. I have had frequent opportunities 'of late to conſider myſelf in theſe different views, and 'hope I have received ſome advantage by it. If what 'Mr. Waller ſays, be true, that

'The ſoul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
'Lets in new light thro' chinks that time has made;

'Then ſurely ſickneſs, contributing no leſs than old age 'to the ſhaking down this ſcaffolding of the body, may 'diſcover the incloſed ſtructure more plainly. Sickneſs is 'a ſort of early old age; it teaches us a diffidence in our 'earthly ſtate, and inſpires us with the thoughts of a 'future, better than a thouſand volumes of Philoſophers 'and Divines. It gives ſo warning a concuſſion to thoſe 'props of our vanity, our ſtrength and youth, that we 'think of fortifying ourſelves within, when there is ſo 'little dependence on our out-works. Youth, at the 'very beſt, is but a betrayer of human life in a gentler 'and ſmoother manner than age: It is like a ſtream that 'nouriſhes a plant upon its bank, and cauſes it to flouriſh 'and bloſſom to the ſight, but at the ſame time is under-'mining it at the root in ſecret. My youth has dealt 'more fairly and openly with me; it has afforded ſeveral 'proſpects of my danger, and given me an advantage 'not very common to young men, that the attractions of 'the world have not dazzled me very much; and I be-'gan where moſt people end, with a full conviction of 'the emptineſs of all ſorts of ambition, and the unſatiſ-'factory nature of all human pleaſures.

'When a ſmart fit of ſickneſs tells me this ſcurvy 'tenement of my body will fall in a little time, I am 'even as unconcerned as was that honeſt Hibernian, who '(being in bed in the great ſtorm ſome years ago, and 'told the houſe would tumble over his head) made an-'ſwer, "What care I for the houſe? I am only a lodger." 'I fancy it is the beſt time to die when one is in the beſt

'humour

'humour, and ſo exceſſively weak as I now am, I may 'ſay with conſcience, that I am not at all uneaſy at 'the thought that many men, whom I never had any 'eſteem for, are likely to enjoy this world after me. 'When I reflect what an inconſiderable little atom every 'ſingle man is, with reſpect to the whole creation, me-'thinks it is a ſhame to be concerned at the removal of 'ſuch a trivial animal as I am. The morning after my 'exit, the ſun will ariſe as bright as ever, the flowers 'ſmell as ſweet, the plants ſpring as green, the world 'will proceed in its old courſe, people will laugh as 'heartily, and marry as faſt as they were uſed to do. 'The memory of man (as it is elegantly expreſſed in 'the wiſdom of Solomon) "Paſſeth away as the re-"membrance of a gueſt that tarrieth but one day." 'There are reaſons enough, in the fourth chapter of 'the ſame book, to make any young man contented 'with the proſpect of death.' "For honourable age is "not that which ſtandeth in length of time, or is mea-"ſured by number of years. But wiſdom is the grey "hair to men, and an unſpotted life is old age. He "was taken away ſpeedily, leſt that wickedneſs ſhould "alter his underſtanding, or deceit beguile his ſoul."

'I am, yours,'

THE END.

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